

Life and Letters

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Contents

Editor's Advertisement	5
The Affairs of Men	7
Roger Fry	Michael E. Sadler 14
De Gloria Paradisi	Basil Blackett 21
Chatterton and You and Me	Laurence Whistler 23
'In the beginning you said—'	Elizabeth Bibesco 25
A Lover	Mary Butts 26
The Applied Science of the Next 100 Years	Julian Huxley 38
Lotus Land	H. J. Massingham 47
The Children's Bread	Mrs. Clement Parsons 57
The Widower's Son	F. J. Kelly 63
Mignon	A. A. Kisby 71
The Market	H. Ide 84
Morning in Seville	H. M. Tomlinson 88
Aunt Felicia	H. H. Bashford 91
Lambs' Tails for Luncheon	Anne Fremantle 101
At Home and Abroad	{ Clive Bell 106
	{ Frank Swinnerton 112
Reviews	116

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Life and Letters

October 1934

Editor's Advertisement

LIFE AND LETTERS has been in existence for six years ; the first number established a tradition which it is the business of all subsequent editors and publishers to preserve. But to preserve that does not preclude certain innovations. The magazine has become larger, and its scope will also be enlarged. There will be a monthly commentary on world affairs : this will be anonymous and written by authors who have first-hand knowledge of that on which they comment. In time it is hoped to have articles and notes on things seen in the streets, in the theatre, on the screen, in picture-galleries, when they have more than a passing interest, or can be given value by the author's handling of them. There will be essays on the governing ideas of the day, in science and in politics. There will be articles on prominent and notorious persons of the past and, sometimes, of the present.

There will be no propaganda, unless a desire for peace, for freedom and for friendliness between nations can be called propaganda. There will be more anonymous articles both on life and letters. The title of the magazine is not an antithesis. Life is not the opposite of letters ; literature is the expression and the interpretation of life and, at the same time, a part of life. It is life's movement. The life of the

mind as expressed in literature is an integral part of the life of man, body and soul. But, as in its past history, the main interest of this review will be literature.

During his editorship Mr. MacCarthy made LIFE AND LETTERS an organ both of the old and the new. Here has been published work by Thomas Hardy, Max Beerbohm, George Santayana, Hilaire Belloc, Arthur Symonds, Augustine Birrell, E. M. Forster, Edith Wharton, Lytton Strachey, Vernon Lee, Somerset Maugham, Aldous Huxley, David Garnett and Virginia Woolf. Those acute critics F. L. Lucas and G. M. Young have contributed. Among younger writers—David Cecil, Peter Quennell, Romilly John, William Plomer, Evelyn Waugh, Antonia White, Stephen Spender, W. H. Auden have also written for it. This brief catalogue shows that LIFE AND LETTERS has a memorable past, even apart from such adventures as the devoting of a single number to Richard Hughes' *High Wind in Jamaica*, and another to Samuel Butler alone (here first appeared the true history of Butler and Pauli), and the publication of the murderer, S. H. Dougal's account of his relations with Miss Holland and of his crime.

Mr. MacCarthy has consented to act with me as advisory editor.

Editor's Advertisement

The future success of *LIFE AND LETTERS*, however, depends on its readers as well as on its contributors.

It is one of the editorial tasks to act as a liaison officer between his authors and his readers: authors are ready enough with suggestions, but readers are rather shy about expressing their views. I hope they will overcome this. What every editor would like to know is, not only what his readers chiefly value in a magazine, but why those who do not read it are left unconvinced by the elect who do ; but readers must not expect a magazine which does not cater for a single group to please everyone every month from the first page to the last.

R. ELLIS ROBERTS.

DEAR ELLIS ROBERTS,

I have read your editorial note for the October number, and I am very pleased to be associated again with *LIFE AND LETTERS*, if only in an ancillary way, from November onwards.

I was glad when Messrs. Cape took it over. We have something to learn from that brief interlude. On the whole I did not think the magazine improved under the new direction; but there is no doubt that during those few months with Mr. Hamish Miles' editorship *LIFE AND LETTERS* published some remarkable contributions which would not have been so likely to come my own way. And there, by the bye, lies one of the principal difficulties ahead. You say in your note that the success of *LIFE AND LETTERS* depends on its readers as well as its writers. Yes, if the readers do not like it, it is bound

to die. But experience has taught me that what often decides the fate of a magazine is, the attitude, not of the reader, but the writer, or potential contributor, towards it. It is absurd that England should not be able to support several literary magazines. They are necessary to writers. Yet when one is started it is invariably crabbed by those who stand to gain most by its continued existence. The reader is probably satisfied if he or she finds two or three items in a number which give pleasure. Not so the contributor, who usually proceeds (after receiving a compliment on his own work) to agree enthusiastically with anyone who says that the magazine is a packet of rubbish. If this is a form of modesty, it is an unfortunate one. Many literary magazines have been talked to death by young writers, who then find they have no place to put their work, no way of earning even a few pounds by it. Writers are naturally cliquey. They like to appear with birds of their own feather. But this is only possible when there is a great deal of talent about of the same kind – and then only for a short time. The Public want variety. Contributors must therefore put up with what they may consider the feeble catholicity of *LIFE AND LETTERS*. It may not be for either A, B or C an ideal receptacle, but it is a receptacle, and a great deal better than none. Keep it as wide as possible. My difficulty as editor was that possible contributors supposed that I wanted the next number to be exactly like the last, or that because I had published so-and-so's work I could not possibly appreciate theirs. It was not true.

Yours always,
DESMOND MACCARTHY.

The Affairs of Men

IN EUROPE NOW

DURING the last few months the psychological map of Europe has changed to an astonishing extent. It is interesting to attempt to find the crucial moments as well as the vital factors. The relations between Italy and Germany have produced the most complete and important *volte face*. It is more profound and far-reaching than a matter of political expediency. The Latin is revolting against the barbarian, the Fascist is incensed by the 'Nordic' caricature of Fascism. Wotan is no more absurd to the Pope than a German challenge to the glories that were Rome is to Signor Mussolini. And to the Duce the 'were' is also an 'are' and a 'will be.'

The Venice meeting was a complete fiasco. The Italian crowds reserved their cheers for their own man. Signor Mussolini, who is a profound opportunist - this is a compliment and not a paradox - with considerable irony and shrewdness, was appalled to find that Herr Hitler talked in private almost exactly as he talks in public. This curious misconception of public and private life shocked a man who is an acute assessor of his public, be it 100,000 believers or one sceptical individual.

The journalist side of Mussolini, who is essentially *dernière heure*, has never been appreciated by world opinion. He is always more affected by current events than pledged to

preconceived ideas. This is his great strength as a political force. He is able to change his mind behind the smoke screen of a strong personality. Herr Hitler - leaving all moral and political considerations on one side - is a mystic and a medium who will always appear somewhat ridiculous to the Latin mind. The Wagnerian scene is not set in an atmosphere of grapes and sunshine. The danger of the Germans on the Brenner is a matter of grave moment to the statesman and to the politically minded, but German self-glorification maddens the man in the street and the man in the street is the man in the trench.

* * *

It is difficult to know to what degree the Italian Government egged Dr. Dollfuss on in his provocative anti-socialist policy, but the February uprising with its foolishly brutal suppression was a blow to Italian policy, as in those few days Austria lost her position as the petted David of Europe heroically facing Goliath. The revolting details of the Dollfuss murder did a good deal to retrieve the situation, and it is with no desire to disparage that gay, courageous, personally charming and politically single-minded little Catholic that one must recognize that Dollfuss dead is a far greater asset to Austrian independence than Dollfuss living. There has been inevitably a strong anti-Nazi revulsion, and the

The Affairs of Men

fact that Doctor von Schuschnigg was unconnected with the February events, and, though an avowed Monarchist, is less anti-Socialist and more anti-Fascist than any of his colleagues, has enabled him to pursue a policy of appeasement in a more favourable atmosphere than could have been hoped for at any time during the last few months.

But it is useless to deny that a large number of Austrians who detest Hitlerism as such, abhor the alternative of an Italian protectorate.

* * *

The improvement in Franco-Italian relations must be warmly welcomed. Italy has always suffered from an inferiority complex where France is concerned, and the French have undoubtedly been somewhat grudging in their appreciation of the Italian contribution to the Allied victory. They have also perhaps been somewhat tactlessly self-controlled in their indifference to Fascist gibes. But the two great Latin countries are coming together in a common detestation of the barbarian, and Monsieur Barthou's impending visit to Rome should produce fruitful and far-reaching results.

* * *

The attitude of the Little Entente and Poland is causing considerable anxiety to the Quai d'Orsay. Both Poland and Yugo-Slavia are veering more and more towards Germany, and Rome and Belgrade vie with one another in the acerbity of their polemics.

The Serbs are universally recog-

nized as magnificent fighters, and the Italians have been forced to ransack the fourteenth century for proofs of their cowardice. The Yugo-Slavs have not been content to go so far back in their researches, and a situation of great tension exists between the two countries. It seems a pity that with a Government-controlled Press, a little soft-peddalling of nationalistic outbursts should not be possible.

* * *

The entry of Soviet Russia into the League is a matter of first-class importance. Even though fear of Japan rather than love of peace may be her motive, the desirability of intimate, automatic and continuous contact between the representatives of the Great Powers cannot be challenged by any reasonable person. A purely Franco-Russian alliance would have done much more to alarm world opinion than more general agreements arrived at within the framework of the Geneva.

* * *

Dictatorships are alternatives to thought, and their prevalence in Europe to-day is due to the extreme exhaustion which resulted from the War. Just as an individual will go into a nursing home after a nervous breakdown, so various peoples have preferred to abdicate the responsibilities of Government and call in a quack or super-man. But this curious mental apathy has not extended to the spiritual sphere. Alone in Germany the two great Churches are fighting for their faith. In a world being rapidly made fit for sheep only to live in, it is refreshing to recognize the heroic mould of

The Affairs of Men

men like Cardinal Faulhaber and Doctor Niemöller. It is perhaps not generally known that during the white terror which succeeded the assassination of Kurt Eisner in Munich the Cardinal, then in a less invulnerable position, was already preaching tolerance to the Jews. To the 7,000 dissident pastors and their leaders, the Bishops Wurm (Würtemberg), Mahrrens (Hanover) and Heiser (Bavaria), the sympathy and admiration of the whole world must go out. There has never been any tradition of political liberty in Germany, but the tradition of religious freedom has come down from the days of Luther. The Church defeated Bismarck in the Kultur-Kampf; it may well end by defeating lesser men.

* * *

The Saar is for the moment the most acute danger spot in Europe. Before the clean-up of June 30th and the persecution of Catholics in Bavaria and elsewhere, ninety per cent. of the population would have voted for Germany. A majority no doubt still will. But the minority will be large enough to cause an extremely unpleasant situation. Frenchmen, when they talk privately, express nothing but a desire to get the whole thing over and done with. Many, if not most of them, would prefer the Saar to go to Germany rather than a prolongation of the *status quo*, with the continuous agitation that must necessarily accompany it. This is no doubt the reasonable view, but it is difficult to contemplate with equanimity the appalling persecutions and reprisals that will descend on those Catholics, Liberals, intellectuals, Socialists and Jews who have

dared to vote according to their consciences. It is to be doubted whether any police force in the world – even if it outnumbered the inhabitants to the extent that Lord Trenchard's subordinates outnumbered Sir Oswald Mosley's supporters – could ensure free elections. No one can envy the task which confronts the indomitable Mr. Knox.

* * *

The publication of the Guillaune Report, with its unsavoury details concerning the private life of Conseiller Prince and its amazing revelations of the carelessness and incompetence of the police and medical authorities, has caused less of a sensation than might have been expected. The police are on trial throughout France for their handling of the Stavisky scandal – here right and left are united – but the case of the death of M. Prince had become a political matter, the right believing in murder and the left in suicide – advocating would perhaps be a better word. The independent experts – with the exception of certain doctors – are unanimously convinced that it was a case of suicide, and as this view is shared, we are informed on unimpeachable authority, by a majority of the Cabinet, the guns of the right have been somewhat spiked and the possibilities of a second *Affaire Dreyfus* have been eliminated. M. Léon Daudet will continue to have a lot to say, and say it with his customary brilliance. It is the possibility of a solution that makes crime interesting, and the majority of French people have given up the *Affaire Prince* as insoluble and have therefore lost interest in it.

The Affairs of Men

The election of M. Chaumets to the Senate proves how indifferent the provinces are to Parisian agitation and Parisian agitators. The provinces are the backbone and the essence of French political life, and it has been said that both M. Tardieu and M. Léon Blum, for all their brilliant gifts and dominating personalities, have never altogether been able to overcome the handicap of being Parisians.

* * *

It will be very interesting to see the effect that the Socialist-Communist united front has on French political life. Will the new allies find it easier to blend their ideas than the Socialists and the Radical Socialists did in the days of the Cartel? Has the left been strengthened, and if so, which left? In most combinations do not the extremists swallow up the moderates? What is the doctrinaire Socialist thinking and feeling? For in France the strength of Socialism lies in the strength of ideas, of an intellectual Marxian conception, and not as with us in Trade Unionism, working for better social conditions.

* * *

If only Lord Palmerston, that virtuoso of the penultimate, were alive! Twice, when Japan left the League and when Germany (*pace* Mr. Vernon Bartlett) left the League, one loud bark would have been worth a dozen diffident bites. When you talk of English foreign policy(!) abroad, the eminent, being cautious and courteous, speak with the hushed tones accorded to the dead. But after the two minutes' silence of the Armistice is over, conversation breaks loose. Poor Mr. Eden, universally respected and be-

lieved, trots round Europe travelling with a sample but no line of goods. Ultimately Great Britain does as much as and sometimes more than, any other, country. Penultimately she does nothing. To rise to occasions is no doubt magnificent, but to avert them is more intelligent, and less expensive. Incidentally it is the job of diplomacy. *Mot de la fin :*

A very eminent English diplomatist said: "The mistake we have made since the peace is that we have taken the French for the Germans and the Germans for the English."

MORRO CASTLE

A POPULAR American man of letters recently showed alarm over the way the world seems to be going. Though he is a humorist he was unable to find sufficient in the matter for a joke, but he brightened up towards the end of his observations. He found ease in the reflection that 'the dear old Life Force would pull humanity through'; but he did not say to what end we should be pulled through, probably because he did not know.

If only we could believe that optimism - a jolly assurance that despite appearances evil will turn to good - arises from courage, a stout heart! It may not be so. A doubt hangs about us that the genial dismissal of a warning that our work is inherently false and must be changed if we would live - that nothing really is so wrong but that an abstraction will put it right, if we cease to trouble about it, may come of nothing better than poltroonery. It certainly would be nice to believe that if only we would refuse to consider

The Affairs of Men

what our affairs imply, then we could turn away from them in the buoyant faith that no problem exists which good luck will not put right some day. Other people have a similar faith in joss-sticks, or the vote, or dictatorship.

It has been noticeable, however, that though the races for the America's Cup have prompted warm discussions, people have been shy of talking about the *Morro Castle*. At the most, that tragedy has only shown us that passenger ships should have less woodwork about them; comment went no further than woodwork. It was as if we fancied we could see phantoms and devildom through the smoke and flames of that ship, but hoped we were mistaken; we did not dare ask our neighbour whether he, too, saw anything worse in the spectacle than an unfortunate ship on fire.

The pleasure cruiser flew a known and respectable house-flag. It is trusted. The *Morro Castle* was a large and modern liner. The sea, of course, has no terrors now. Science has conquered them. Man has acquired controls which put the accidents and chances of life at sea with old fears of the night. In a liner so huge that not even her master may see the full length of her, except at a distance when he is not aboard her, you may get comfortably drunk at 2 a.m., stewards are there to see you are carried to the right number of your street below, and next day affairs go forward as usual, apparently by divine prompting, as impersonally as do the posts and telegraphs and the morning trains to the city.

Cellular hulls below the water line, water-tight doors operated from the bridge, detectors that announce

fire to the navigating room wherever and as soon as it appears, direction learned by wireless, depth of the sea and bearings by submarine announcements so that speed may be changed in a fog when approaching landfall, and the gyro-compass and gyro-navigator — we are all right now. The express modern liner is the work of the engineer and physicist; attendant man has nothing to do but touch the inevitable buttons and away she goes, immune from the threats of the elemental powers. Anyhow, there is no room to doubt that the *Morro Castle* was a first-rate liner, and complied in her construction and management with all the statutes.

Yet this horror! The *Morro Castle's* was a cruise for pleasure, too, when all should go as merry as a marriage bell. So confident was everybody that their feet, if not borne up by angels, were at least in the more competent keeping of science, that farewell cocktail parties were going on, and had even gone so far that some of the merry-makers had been carried helpless to their berths when the fire or fires appeared. There is no moral reflection in this. It might happen to anyone, among the farewell drinks after a happy occasion. And why indeed should anybody worry, with all those safeguards for security about?

If a cynical sensationalist with an ugly mind had written a story which launched such a ship as a means to show folly inviting its doom, confident in its safeguards for its security, he would have been rebuked. Quite piously rebuked, too. Despite experience, we are always sure that the dear old Life Force will pull us through.

The Affairs of Men

We have no doubt that men will not be fools to the verge of the steep place till a day comes round once more when we see them at their wit's end. London is a community greater even than that of the greatest ship, and certainly open to threats from ill-defined powers; but with proper safeguards for its security we have nothing to fear, except panic. And if we have the safeguards, why panic?

There the *Morro Castle* was, in the dark, nearing her home port, a self-contained community girded about with all that invention could do for its welfare. The ancient sea was irrelevant. In any case, there were the boats, among other safeguards. Besides, when we are upborne by anything so immense and powerful that we cannot see all of it, nor understand its power, and observe that our neighbours never question its invulnerability, why not have a drink? The officials, too, are on watch; they know. Moreover, any reason for disaffection among the workers about us would be as invisible and unknown as the sources of conflagration. Why not turn in? We are asleep when a few far servants are trying to douse the initial smouldering, a queer interlude watched with interest, it seems, by some whose last drink was a little later than usual.

Nothing could break through the well-considered organisation of such a community. The fire appliances are all modern, and ubiquitous. Everybody knows what to do, whatever happens. Touch the nearest button. How comforting, too, nowadays, to know that other ships, all our allies, are within the call of another little button up aloft! What time breakfast in the

morning? Touch the button – we are fool-proof. Mr. Baldwin said only the other day that our frontier is now the —. Yes, yes, of course, we were talking of the safeguards and security of the *Morro Castle*. She had perfect organization; and a fire appeared at night. All the buttons were touched, but they didn't seem to work. It was only the fire that worked. The very devil seemed to be in it. Spies? Anarchy? The providential chemicals seemed to feed it. The hose-pipes gave a bulge or two, then flattened out. Aren't our engines working the pumps? – where had we better go?

Yesterday's happy travellers begin to crowd the alleyways. The dark, and the sound of the sea – that is suddenly noticed – are made remarkable by flames in a place where quoits and tennis were being played last noon. Where's the captain? He knows all about it. But that unlucky man has a complex task which is so great, as ships are now, as communities are now, that his well-planned organization with its safeguards for everybody's security becomes as futile as a safety-pin in an avalanche. He is helpless. The simple truth is that no organization and no regulations and safeguards will hold the flooding emotions of a multitude suddenly terrified by the apparent breakdown of its recondite security, the science of which it never understood. The pride which foundered the *Titanic* is forgotten. If the flames of the *Morro Castle* do not warn us of the peril inherent in affairs grown monstrous yet made quite secure – when all seems well – with little buttons that only need touching when necessary, then what flames are we waiting for as a signal?

The Affairs of Men

POLITICAL questions still have an odd tendency to follow ecclesiastical patterns. No one who was at the Labour Conference and heard the controversy between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Bevan could fail to be reminded of the bitterness of theological quarrels; while Sir Stafford Cripps and his group were excommunicated in the manner familiar to students of church conflicts. As in these conflicts, it is probable that the official Labour Party has taken advantage of formal rules in order to 'larn' Sir Stafford to be a nuisance; and his subsequent election to the executive may be the first step in a transformation as sadly realistic as the metamorphosis of Macdonald. At present, however, he is all the party has of ginger. No one admits to needing ginger: everyone resents the implication that his condition is so poor that ginger has to be administered.

There may be a real change of opinion about the seriousness of the Fascist movement in this country. Here it is likely that the Labour Party is right and the Socialist League and the Communists wrong. So long as Sir Oswald Mosley's followers could be confused with Boy Scouts the average Englishman did not mind them. As soon as they make any pretensions to be an amateur army they will find those pretensions bitterly and riotously resented. Those who were in Hyde Park at the great Fascist fiasco agree in the opinion that Mosley was booed and catcalled

into silence, not by ardent Communists, but by a proper Cockney crowd, the good-humoured, serious, critical crowd of London.

THE reception of the news of the Welsh mining disaster shows that the public can still be shocked by a large-scale catastrophe. What is so disconcerting is the public's inability to be shocked at the less spectacular, because less concentrated, catastrophes which occur on the roads. Terrible as is the death roll in the Gresford mine, it is small enough in comparison with Juggernaut's unwilling victims. No doubt the public's relative indifference to the slaughter by automobile is because most of the public have or travel in motor cars: very few of us own mines, so we can satisfy our sense of pity and horror by denouncing mine-owners (if we think them guilty of negligence), but are careful in our attack on negligences of which tomorrow we may be guilty. Meanwhile Mr. Hore-Belisha's effort to cope with the traffic problem is proceeding. A few silly and furious motorists are protesting against the safety lanes - which have been in successful existence in Paris now for over two years. One Jehu wrote to the papers to say that a motorist could not stop his car when he approached a lane on which pedestrians were crossing; yet he can stop without any difficulty for a red light, or a policeman's arm, or if the car in front of him is suddenly and unexpectedly checked.

Roger Fry: an appreciation

by Michael E. Sadler

ON many English people of my generation two men – Roger Fry and C. J. Holmes – by writing about the design of pictures and the significance of art, had a trenchant and, within limits, even a crystallizing influence. There are, of course, other living English writers who have coloured our ideas about the pattern and purpose of painting, and have etched their thoughts on our minds – such as Bernhard Berenson, D. S. MacColl, Henry Tonks, Clive Bell, Laurence Binyon and, more recently, R. H. Wilenski, Eric Gill, and Herbert Read; with Frank Rutter and Charles Marriott in the columns of the press, and the late E. J. van Wisselingh, the late Martin Leggatt, P. M. Turner, Alec Martin, D. M. Macdonald, Ralph Keene, Oliver Brown, F. Mayor, Sydney Burney, and Mrs. Wertheim, among the dealers. But Holmes and Fry stand out by the degree of their achievement in changing the canons of our judgment and taste – Holmes chiefly by his book modestly called *Notes on the Science of Picture-making*, by his *Notes on the Art of Rembrandt*, and by *The Grammar of the Arts*: Fry, in part by his public lectures (he was one of the best lecturers of our day), in part

by the volume of collected essays to which he gave the arresting name *Vision and Design*, by some of the papers which he included in the volume entitled *Transformations*, and by his study of the development of Cézanne.

Like Holmes, Fry was a painter. Their knowledge of the craft gave a tang to their talk about it, as it did to Fromentin's *Les Maîtres d'autrefois*, to some of Ruskin's pieces, to Vincent van Gogh's letters to his brother, and to Vernon Blake's *Relation in Art*. Partly by their timeliness, partly by their moral courage, most of all by a fundamental quality in their judgment, Holmes and Fry impressed a certain character on much contemporary English thinking about art, just as Keynes and Cole have done in the sphere of political economics; as Lytton Strachey and Harold Nicolson have done in diplomatic biography; as Havelock Ellis and B. Malinowski have done in regard to the psychology of sex; as W. T. Arnold, Eyre Crowe, and Spenser Wilkinson gave a sharp turn to the wheel of our thoughts about the defence of the realm; as Bertrand Russell and Edmond Holmes did for our perception of the ethical and social presuppositions of school-train-

Michael E. Sadler

ing, whether private or under public authority; and as Bernard Shaw, Dr. Inge, Dr. B. H. Streeter, G. K. Chesterton, John Macmurray and Fathers D'Arcy and Martindale have done as regards our disposition towards belief.

Fry's and Holmes' writing about art is less emotional than German interpretative criticism of the school of Meier-Graefe, less institutional and standardized than that of the Central European authorities marshalled for the Propylaen Kunst-Geschichte: less mordant than the French dealer Ambrose Vollard's, less stencilled than the journalism of Camille Mauclair and his like: less prone to go off the deep end than the Americans A. J. Eddy and Gertrude Stein. Fry and Holmes are as different as Harold Laski and Mr. Baldwin. But we have learnt from both of them to see modern painting and sculpture with eyes less dimmed by habit and inattention.

II

Certain families in England transmit exceptional power of mind or feeling. This power shows itself in different forms in successive generations. The sap in the family tree is strong with the Darwins, the Arnolds, the Huxleys, the Cecils, the Woods, the Macaulays, the Priestleys, the Wedgwoods, the Lyttons, the Venns, the Pollocks, the Gilpins, and the Frys. Behind the personality of Roger Fry, highly individualized as he was, one saw the aura of the family talent. And it was no accident that one of his sisters bore a part, perhaps a decisive part, in persuading and helping him

to assemble and revise for publication in volume form, writings that would otherwise have been fugitive and half-forgotten. (The dedication in *Vision and Design* reads: 'To my sister Margery without whose gentle, but persistent pressure this book would never have been made.'))

The Quakerly tradition of the Frys took a new form in Roger but is, I think, the key to his temperament. Members of the Society of Friends are bred in sincerity. Sincerity of vision, integrity of mind, fearlessness, devotion to honesty in judgment and in utterance, were fundamental in Roger Fry's character and writing. He had liberty. He had travelled far away from the tone and tune of Friends' Meeting, but he was *chien de race*. In what he wrote about art there was the reality, the warmth, the plainness, the sudden thrill of the right word, which mark Quaker speech about what has been personally experienced and is therefore believed. And often in Roger Fry's method of approaching the question of what is significant and crucial in a painter's purpose and pattern, there was more than an echo of the spiritual exercises of the Society of Friends - exercises akin to what is most human, tender and discriminating in the way of dealing with conscience practised by experienced Catholic and Anglo-Catholic priests. It was this holy guile in Roger Fry's lectures which made him half Quaker, half Jesuit. He smiled on one with enchanting compassion, but was formidable with his masked batteries of erudition. He was gay, like a good priest; but hanging on a nail behind him, one saw the stole of authority.

Roger Fry: an appreciation

III

On the bole of a mulberry tree there are two kinds of leaf – so different that you would not think of them as belonging to the same tree. In the same fashion, when you look at the leaves of his books, you might fancy that there were two Frys. There was the Fry who in his thirties was (I am told on good authority) in the front rank of contemporary English judges of early Italian painting, and among English students of early French painting supreme. This was the Fry who, in the nineties, was designated as Poynter's successor in the Directorship of the National Gallery. We should have had him in Trafalgar Square instead of Holroyd, had not official routine delayed the nomination till Fry had pledged himself to accept the Curatorship of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and did not feel free to give the Americans backword. Then there was the other Fry, who was to the pundits *hézem* (to use the Hebrew word), like Jericho cursed by Joshua – the Fry who, by his exciting Post-Impressionist shows at the Grafton Gallery, tried to 'enable the dullness of our blinded sight' to see the significance of Cézanne and the magic of Matisse. This was the same Fry, who chose as one of the illustrations of his chapter on the French Post-Impressionists, the Profile (with a blackened eye) by Georges Rouault, adding the comment that it showed 'profound knowledge of natural appearances' and came 'from the author's collection.' And the same Fry rallied in the Omega workshops a brilliant brigade of young artists – since famous

– who painted screens and furniture and designed carpets and textiles with seminal originality before the War, pioneers of what, twenty years later, the public begins to find to its taste. This was the Fry who had a 'concern' to carry into provincial cities – I had the good fortune to come across it in Birmingham – a collection of paintings by then unknown painters of high talent, because like John Woolman, he found himself 'united with the suffering seed.'

But there were not two Frys, but one Fry. He had experienced (but in his own non-theological way) what the Evangelicals call conversion. Sometime before 1912 (I do not know the exact year) 'a fire and a hammer broke and dissolved his heart.' There is a premonition of this in the preface, which he wrote in 1905 to his edition of Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses*. 'Tradition may degenerate into sterility, for the laws of artistic expression differ in this from those of science, that their value is not fixed once for all: it depends upon the ardour and force of conviction with which they are accepted. . . . Nearly always the genuine artist has been among the iconoclasts. . . . But the rising generation of artists, especially in England, is turning with a new reverence to the art of the past: is beginning to realise that there are problems in art, the solution of which requires the persistent application of intelligence rather than the improvization of genius. We are tired of a too self-assertive individualism; and we are ready to listen with profit to the sage counsels and constructive policy of Reynolds.'

This is the key to the paradox of

Michael E. Sadler

Fry – to the developing unity of fundamental doctrine which underlay his artistic intuition and faith. Because he was eagerly alive, honest and sensitive to true values, his pen and his voice taught us to catch something of what he had learnt, in orgasms of sensibility and divination, from Chou bronzes, from Giotto, from Raphael, from the imaginative symmetry of Fra Bartolommeo, from the plastic power of Gabun sculpture, from Claude and Chinese landscape, from Corot's drawings of women, and from the frenzied vehemence of Vincent; from Seurat, Chardin, Kandinsky and McKnight Kauffer. Fry was not eclectic, but unifying. The saint knows sanctity even in a brothel. Fry perceived beauty under any Cinderella disguise. He stretched our understandings, tore away the membrane of our prejudice, united himself with the beauty which his eye and spirit discerned, and rubbed away, like chalk under a duster, pedantries of preference for 'old masters' or for 'modern art'.

Therefore it was a natural expression of his genius (genius is not too sacred a word for the interpretations which from time to time flashed from his spirit) that he should have been the true begetter of the *Burlington Magazine* and also have shocked the sanhedrim by his modernism. He was as brave as von Tschudi, whom the Kaiser did down. 'One of the greatest critics of our time, von Tschudi' (Fry wrote in 1920) — 'of Swiss origin, I hasten to add, and an enemy of the Kaiser' — was showing me El Greco's "Laocoon" which he had just bought for Munich, when he whispered to me, as being too dangerous a doctrine to be spoken

aloud even in his private room, "Do you know why we admire El Greco's handling so much? Because it reminds us of Cézanne."'

The year before the War, Bach's Matthew Passion was performed at the University of Leeds. On the walls of the room hung a great table of the atomic numbers of the elements, and microphotograms of gold and silver showing exquisite patterns like Roger Fry's fabrics from the Omega workshop or parts of a rug from Chinese Turkestan. All was in keeping—music, microphotograms, and memories of Fry's designs. But it was he who had unsealed our understanding.

IV

To an Oxford nose Fry smelt of Cambridge. He was unsnobbish; scientifically learned; unsweetened; on occasion, ruthless; Platonist not Aristotelian; and averse to the profitable courtesies of compromise.

He was never Professor of Fine Art at Oxford. But if the choice had depended on popular suffrage among the young, he would have been elected hands down. Our Arts Club, which is mostly under thirty years of age, would rather have him as guest and lecturer than any living man or woman in the whole kaleidoscope of the League of Nations, with the United States and Germany thrown in. Once we asked him at very short notice. He was in Norfolk, indisposed, but he came. The bills which he lithographed for us were only posted three days before the lecture. He had promised to speak in the hall of

Roger Fry: an appreciation

University College – from the dais on which William Morris made his startling confession of Socialism, with Ruskin sitting like a bird with croup huddled in a chair at his feet. Half an hour before Fry's lecture, when the tables had hardly been cleared of dinner, the hall was crammed. And the queue of disappointed latecomers stretched right across the quad into the High.

'Baudelaire,' Fry wrote in his essay on Fra Bartolommeo, 'compared the great names in art to lighthouses posted along the track of historic time. The simile, as he used it, seizes the imagination and represents a great truth, but it allows of an interpretation which the limits of a sonnet form forbade him to develop. He takes the lights of his beacons as much for granted as the sailor does the lights of real lighthouses. But the lighthouses of art do not burn with so fixed and unvarying a lustre. The light they give is always changing insensibly with each generation, now brighter, now dimmer, and often enough growing bright once more. But we sometimes forget that the lights have to be tended, or they grow faint, and may expire altogether. For them to burn brightly they must be fed by the devotion of some few spirits in each generation. If that fail for a long period they go out, and become one of those dead ineffectual names which still linger on, obstructions rather than aids to the historical voyager.'

Fry trimmed the beacons. He was unsoiled by Stock Exchange calculations of 'futures' in works of art. Like his father, he was furious when he discovered any desecration of public

values by private profit. No elder brother of Trinity House could have kept his hands cleaner from champerty.

V

Not every great writer on education has been himself a practising schoolmaster. Locke was not, nor J. J. Rousseau, nor Kant. But, like John Dewey, they all had some experience with pupils, if not at the desk. Fry was a great writer of English, because he had the gift of divination and the grace of fortitude, not because he was a painter. But unless he had been trained to the easel and become a practising artist, he would never have been able to say some of his wisest things, or to defend fellow painters from misunderstanding and injustice. If there is a memorial exhibition of his works, it will show how diversified his talent was, how beautiful are many of his landscapes, how revealing some of his portraits, how brilliant his drawing on paper and on stone, and how buoyant was the jet of his fountain of design. No living Englishman or woman (and there are many who have won their 'Blues' in this branch of art) does anything much better than Fry's lithographed placards. And there are good drawings of Segovia and Ciudad (though they would look better in sanguine) at the end of the book which the Hogarth Press published for him in 1923 under the title of *A Sampler of Castile*.

VI

His family and some of his friends met together on Thursday, Septem-

Michael E. Sadler

ber 13th, when Roger Fry's body was wheeled into the furnace. Never again will great audiences hear that enchanting voice, or see that noble head; that countenance, worn, tender, wistful, winning, masterful, or feel the play of his humour, which was like a wash of colour brushed suddenly over his words. It seems tragic waste that he should have gone so soon. He was only sixty-eight and there might have been ten or more mellow years. And the end was pitiful – a fall in his room, a broken pelvis, great pain, and in the retching of sickness a failure of the heart. But the very suddenness and agony of his going have made those who knew his greatness more aware of what he did for art and honesty and letters in England. And the sharp snapping of the cord of life may be the price to be paid for a juster understanding of his antiseptic, unheartening influence in our national life.

It was a lovely warm autumn afternoon at Golders Green. The sky and trees seemed to rejoice for him. We sat in silence – no prayers, no hymns. But on an inner page of the Quakerly sheet which gave his name and age there were printed the lines from *Comus* which end thus:

‘Yet some there be that by due steps
aspire

To lay their just hands on the golden
key

That opes the palace of eternity.’

The choice had been well made. The great Cambridge poet had thought of such a spirit, of such just courage, as Fry's.

He might, if things had taken

another turn and if the age into which he was born had been less storm-tossed by inevitable doubts, have written as Pascal wrote and believed as Pascal believed. But it was fitting that at his going we should have a bit of Spinoza to read. ‘A free man thinks of death least of all things, and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life.’

Roger Fry would not use the name of God lightly, or easily invoke it. But what the author of the hymn in the *Sarum Primer* wrote was what Fry tried to make true.

‘God be in my head
And in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes
And in my looking.’

VII

Much of what is greatest in criticism is involuntarily autobiographical. In 1927 Roger Fry published the most poignant of his books. It is called *Cézanne: a study of his development*. It was out of the depth of his own experience that Fry was writing when he said of Cézanne: ‘For him, as I understand his work, the ultimate synthesis of a design was never revealed in a flash; rather he approached it with infinite caution, stalking it as it were, now from one point of view, now from another, and always in fear lest a premature definition might deprive it of something of its total complexity. For him the synthesis was an asymptote towards which he was for ever approaching without ever quite reaching it: it was a reality, incapable of complete realization.’

Roger Fry: an appreciation

And again, when he wrote, near the end of the book: 'Cézanne counts pre-eminently as a great Classic master. . . . His saying that he wished to "do Poussin again after nature" is no empty boast. Cézanne was a Classic artist, but perhaps all great Classics are made by the repression of a Romantic. In this respect we find a curious parallel to Cézanne in Flaubert. These two men indeed, though so isolated, were both typical of a certain aspect of the spiritual process of the nineteenth century, and, though so different in character, described in their lives such similar curves that the comparison between them is not altogether unilluminating. Both were children of the Romantic movement, both shared the sublime and heroic faith in art which that movement engendered, its devotion and absolutism. Both found the way by an infinitely laborious process out of the too facile formulæ of their youth to a

somewhat similar position, to an art based on passionate study of actual life but ending in a complete transformation of its data. Both were fortunately entrenched in the solid position of a modest but assured income, which enabled them to brave the violent storms of indignation which each, in his own line, provoked, not indeed from any desire for advertisement or self assertion, but as an inevitable result of following the dictates of æsthetic expression. Without this accidental protection it is unthinkable that either should have been able to function. But that condition being given, the perfect devotion of their lives to an idea, their utter disregard of all recognition by the world, have in each case something of heroic magnanimity.'

All this was true of Roger Fry. We honoured and loved him for never making terms with Mammon.

De Gloria Paradisi

From the Latin of St. Peter Damian

by Basil Blackett

FOR the springs of living waters pants my parchéd soul athirst:
Still my spirit, prison'd, exiled, longs its bars of flesh to burst,
Straining, yearning, pining, burning for the home it knew at first.

Here it moaneth and it groaneth, faint with sin, by care fordone;
In surrender sees the splendour of the glory that is gone:
Sting of present sorrow sharpens memory of bliss foreknown.

In that realm of perfect peace and joy and happiness untold
Pearly mansions gleam to heaven capped with domes of burnished gold,
And the dwellings of the Saints are decked with riches manifold.

For the building of that city only precious stones are meet:
Polished gold, and clear as crystal, is the paving of the street.
There nor filth, nor slime, nor mire can befoul the passer's feet.

Winter's ire, summer's fire, that fair city never knows:
In its gardens, sweet with balsam, spring eternal breathes and blows,
White with lily, bright with crocus, red with ever-blooming rose.

Green its fields and clean its pastures; flow with honey stream and rill:
Fragrant scents and luscious juices aromatic herbs distil:
Fruits that fall not bend the laden boughs of orchards flowering still.

Moon and sun and stars unsleeping keep their constant watch aright:
Christ, the Lamb, upon that city sheds His never-failing light:
Day perpetual reigneth alway: ne'er intrudeth Time nor Night.

Lo! the visage of each Saint there, as the Sun, in glory glows:
Victors, jubilant, triumphant, sharing heaven's sure repose,
They rehearse their well-fought battles and recount their conquered foes.

De Gloria Paradisi

They are cleansed from taint of evil, lust of flesh and passion wild:
Member wars no more with member, mind and body reconciled:
They shall dwell in peace for ever, holy spirits undefiled.

They have turned from all that changeth to the changeless source of all:
They behold the very beauty of the Godhead actual:
Sweet and living waters drink they from the fount perennial.

They have caught the rhythmic measure that is life's eternity,
Life from change and chance immune, abundant, active, joyous, free.
Age enfeebles not and sickness saps not their virility.

Therefore is their Being timeless: fleetingness is fled away:
Ardour, vigour, valour fill them: gone corruption and decay:
Immortality is master over death's dead mastery.

Knowing Him who knoweth all things, nought can be to them unknown:
Each his fellow's secrets sharing shares with all the rest his own:
In refusing and in choosing all their several wills are one.

Diverse gifts, unequal merits bring no inequality:
Thine is what thou lov'st in others – this is heaven's charity:
Thus belongs what each possesses to their whole community.

Surely, whereso'er the body, must the eagles gather there:
One the Bread and One the Body which the Saints and Angels share:
Citizens of Earth and Heaven thus their unity declare.

Always filled yet always eager for that true and living Bread:
Pangs of hunger gnaw them never: never are they surfeited:
What they have they still desire: still they crave and still are fed.

Anthems new and hymns of glory tuneful voices ever sing:
Organ's music charms their ears with harmonies re-echoing:
Laud they Him who made them victors: praise they Him who is their King.

Happy souls, that stand in presence of the King of Heaven on high,
And behold beneath their feet this Earth and Sun and Moon and Sky
And the clusters of the Stars that whirl in space eternally.

Christ, who art the soldier's palm-wreath, bring me to Thy city blest:
Let me enter there, Thy veteran, and unarm at Thy behest,
To receive my portion there, and dwell with Thine elect at rest.

Grant me strength to battle on undaunted in this ceaseless war:
Grant me peace when I have fought my fight and earthly life is o'er:
Be my guerdon to possess Thee utterly for evermore.

Chatterton and You and Me

by Laurence Whistler

CHATTERTON before he killed himself
Danced seventeen times around a minor star
On a cooled stone still fiery at the core,
Poor boy if he had waited for ten dances more
He would have been where the Eternal are.
The sparrows now, he heard,
Are remote dignified ancestors; his bones
Crumbled into London; every word
Said then in London forgotten. But the stones
He kicked, our children's children's child shall fall
And graze its knee against.
And he, and we and golden lovers all
Go dancing on a monstrous tiny stone
About a fiery star;
When some feel tired
Always happy dancers waiting are
(This way the world renews its capital).

. . . And entered with a frost of rain
That glittered in the firelit air
On blown hair, her blown gold hair
And lay in flakes across her hands -
And little petals sticking to her cheeks,
It was almost pain
For him to breathe the known heart of her hair
And the breath of the dark streets on her.
Two then were one
And the small heaven was there that loves locked doors
Where they lay curled.
For him: he was in Eden gates again
And he would love her
Always, even unto the end of the world . . .

Chatterton and You and Me

He said this. This was done
Many centuries ago: as many beyond to-morrow.
Time's insignificant. Stones
Are lasting, they are stronger than bones.
Lovers are no more than the instant joy and sorrow
They feel. A bright match carried in a catacomb.
A length of fiery being on the clock.
They are not even lasting as their bones.
Think upon stones.

‘In the beginning you said—’

by Elizabeth Bibesco

IN the beginning you said to me: ‘My dear,
Who made your eyes so dark and your voice so clear,
Who gave you the hidden wound that has banished fear?’

In the beginning you said: ‘Is life so rude
That no emissaries of the senses shall dare intrude
Into the boundless wastes of your solitude?’

In the beginning you said: ‘Who made you free
Even of the woven fabric of liberty?
Why is the night-air yours and the stretches of the sea?’

In the beginning I said: ‘I have no more defence
Against the encroaching music of sound and sense
My heart is yours and so is my innocence.

‘Once more I can laugh with the spring since you caught it for me.
And pity the skylark in all of her ecstasy
Since she cannot know the joys of captivity.’

In the beginning I said: ‘You have made me wise
With a kiss on each eyelid to close my recalcitrant eyes
And give me the blindness with which to see paradise.’

In the end I said: ‘It could only be you, my dear,
Who could make my eyes so dark and my voice so clear
And give me the ultimate wound that must banish fear.’

In the end I said: ‘You have shown me a life so rude
That no emissaries of the senses could dare intrude
Into the boundless wastes of my solitude.’

In the end I said: ‘You have stolen my self from me:
Gone is the cold night and the stretches of the sea.
You have left me only the tattered remnants of liberty.

‘But out of those tattered rags I will make the dress
That only the wise can see and the gods possess
Thus arrayed I will enter the freedom that fools call emptiness.’

A Lover

by Mary Butts

THE two friends sat together, talking over the last night's party and particularly one man who had been there.

They were very old friends, the young actor and the woman who had given the party, who had come up from the remote country to find out what London was like; and because she knew how to give parties, people came to her house; and she had already seen a great deal of what happens in London.

They talked of the people who had got off at the party or changed partners when it had got to its riotous stage: of the two men from the Ballet who had danced: of the punch it had taken three days to make and three hours to drink. Going through it all carefully, she with an eye for failures as well as for successes: for people to ask again: for people to forget about as soon as possible.

All this done away with, she came to what she had been waiting to ask and her friend to answer—the amiable, fussy man, something of a match-maker and rather concerned for this woman who lived alone in the white Victorian house, with tall rooms good for parties and a balcony over a walled garden ending in trees. (This happened some years ago, when parties

were still gay, before they took their agonized, bitter, debauched twist.) Perhaps it had something to do with her, though she never interfered, only the people who came to the house at their worst sometimes left at their best.

'Now tell me, Alec,' she said, 'about your new friend.' She noticed at once how his voice changed, charged as he spoke with unaffected grief.

'Alan, Alan Courcy — that's his name in case you didn't get it. French — not Huguenot — Revolution, I believe. I'd rather like to tell you about him.'

'I'm listening. Go ahead.'

'I got to know him because he's a great actor gone wrong. Met him on tour — in another company. He'd understudied Richard the III and went on suddenly. I saw it by accident. He played him like a flame out of hell. White too and piteous — something I shall never forget.'

'Reading the character? I don't quite see it. Or just touching up his own personality?'

'The last, I suppose. But it was thrilling. Finished work, too: no raw edges. Then I got to know him.'

So it all came out. The family behind this Alan Courcy, a mother he adored and quarrelled with and could not do without; a step-father he played up against her so abominably that the

Mary Butts

hapless man periodically kicked his step-son out of the house. Some money. No need to work. Badly knocked about in the War. An equal gift for painting; for quarrelling with managers; for destroying his work unfinished. For believing in himself: for disbelieving in himself. All of which meant in Alec's simple mind that it was a case for his dear Anne, with her trick of harmonizing people. She must take Alan up, persuade him what a wonderful fellow he really was; what a wonderful world it is. Get him to become his promises, some of his promises, all of his promises. Alec was a sentimental optimist about human beings. Though when he saw the pair of them together on the stage of his own mind, his actor's eye hesitated. It was not quite so easy to see them playing opposite. Anne—tree-tall, calm and light. Alan—a conceit formed in his mind, *surréaliste* image of a dachshund and a snake. Heavens! how the man did wriggle about. He could see the small, pale, nervous body flinging itself from side to side in an agony of self-assertion and self-depreciation and viperish verbal depreciation of others. It would take all Anne's earth-power to restore that to its original well-being. It was Alec's faith that there had been well-being once. Besides—besides—there rose in his mind the essential thing in Alan Courcy's history, the shattering, appalling fact round which his murdered youth was impaled; and as he turned again to Anne, she saw his kind eyes full of tears.

'Besides, Anne, besides—there is the thing that happened to him. That it should have happened to him

of all people.' It passed quickly through her mind that this Alan did not look the man to be the victim of one annihilating fact, a man too flexible, too diverse. But Alec was an honest creature and not stupid when you discounted the sentiment.

'Go on,' she said.

'He told me when we first met—He was all to pieces after playing Richard. He has never told me not to tell. It was this. He was in Vienna before they ruined it. Just-before-the-War Vienna.' The sigh passed their lips without which the name of that city is never said. Alec went on: 'It was there he got engaged to a girl, a proper engagement, family and all. When the War happened he wrote and wrote. Heard she and her people were in difficulties. Brother after brother killed. Then there was the famine and he sent money. Money, you know, and love and hope. After a time he got no more answers, but he went on. Then, directly it was over, he dashed across. And couldn't find them. Utter strangers in their house. Jews. Went to their country house and found it in ruins. There had been some local fighting, and he says they must have left it in a hurry; that in a fallen-in summer-house he found her handkerchief and a book; and the beginning, only the beginning, of a dreadful letter to him. I saw that. He carries it about and he read it to me. She had never had one of his letters. Nor the money. She knew nothing. Except that he did not care for her any more.

'At last he got on her track. They'd been driven, her mother and one sister, away to some other town.

A Lover

Became beggars together. Till she died – of starvation, really. A quick illness and no heart left. The woman who had tried to nurse her told him. “Alan,” she said when she was dying, “I’d stay if you had. But you’ve gone and I’d better go too.” Then she died. By the time he got there, they were all dead. He says he died too for a bit. Perhaps he’s never come back. Lots of us haven’t. Only one feels that we all ought to be damned decent – to see if we can help him pull through. I can’t help feeling it’s a bit up to us.’

By the time he had finished speaking, tears were running down both their cheeks.

* * *

Half an hour later Anne saw Alec, on and off the stage the eternal *compère*, out of the house. That he had just filled his *rôle* she understood laughing; but she was not laughing when she turned to her desk and wrote to Alan Courcy to ask him to dinner.

* * *

‘Anne Clavel, dear, I suppose you’ll be saying that I must take the job with a lowly and thankful heart and work up the part and not tell the producer that a cockney accent goes badly with iambic pentameter; and that Shakespeare talked a nice country accent with a burr, like a woolly caterpillar. How tiresome and moral and athletic, and how very, very good for me.

‘Yes, I will. You’re the only being on earth I would do it for. You are making things different. Taken a fool, trying to have a private life as much like des Esseintes as possible, out of his dark room. Opened *all* the windows, let out the musk and amber

and let in garden smells. Only why did you do it? Why? Why? Why? Why in hell or out of it should anyone bother about me, licking perfectly disgusting sores in the dark?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Anne peacefully, but gratified; ‘I don’t like septic wounds. And I couldn’t stand the tortoise.’

‘The tortoise?’

‘Don’t you remember? Your des Esseintes had its shell set with carbuncles to watch it glow as it crept round, and it killed it; and he could see the stones still shining in the dark of his infernal flat until it occurred to him where the stink came from. Some of your memories were too like that tortoise for me.’ Alan had left the deck chair and was laying on the grass in the garden at her feet. At this he dropped a moment, his face hidden, resting on his arms. She could see the slight shoulders quiver. ‘*Mon vieux*,’ she called after a moment, very gently. The ravaged, petulant head turned up to her again.

‘Witty, searching beast of a woman. I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. But I won’t be like a tortoise gone bad – even a tortoise with jewels stuck in it.’

‘I never said you; only some of the things you think about.’

‘If you weren’t so utterly right, and didn’t make it rather funny, I’d lose my temper and show you what sort of a nasty, catty, self-pitying, little martyr I am. But, oh! Anne, what put it into your head to see through me so comfortingly? When I came to your party, I actually found myself behaving like a human being. I’m usually rather awful at parties. Drink too much and either

Mary Butts

cry or else insult my hostess; and instead I found myself indulging in an innocent frolic.' Anne thought: 'It had better come now.' She was more and more moved, as by something that seemed rather exquisite, wild and young and wounded, that had stopped fidgeting and lay on the grass at her feet, still and appeased, as if waiting for some word from her to make him stand up and let fall a great burden and then move – swiftly and harmoniously and with joy. Like a man delivered from the hell of his own mind. And from more than his mind, from what had been done to him. Like many women after the War, she had been busy patching up; spending herself on it, still young enough to expect too much, old enough to suffer, but not wholly break her heart.

'It was Alec,' she said slowly; 'he told me.'

'Dear old Alec! Such a pattern of the stage. Such a – *comprimé* of all its best traditions. So good' – his voice was gentle – 'that I bore it the other day when he put his hand on my shoulder and called me a priceless old fruit.'

'Be thankful it wasn't "laddie".'

'You always have an answer – the sort that put things in a better light. It would be intolerable if it wasn't true. Anne, Anna, Annette – Anna Perenna, the moon-in-and-out. Which shall I call you?' He twisted round suddenly and sat staring up at her. A dreadful change came over his face, the eyes staring, the body taut; the bright restless eyes, brown-irised, the whites shaded with blue, starting out of his head. Anne thought she had never seen eyes so haunted, so crazed with hopeless escape. Flight down the cor-

ridors of the mind, each one that ended with a door, and nailed to it the same dreadful, bleeding god. We each have one to meet, but this man's was Eros crucified. The girl he loved dying out there so slowly, one victim among those millions out in Central Europe, where the folk-wanderings meet and cross and destroy. A long time ago. . . . Heavens! what had ancient history to do with it? But man had thought he had made himself a reasonably safe place there in the heart of those lands, where Dacia once stood with its chain of towers. Till Trajan came and took the Red Tower and the palace-fortress of Sarmizegethusa; and there Rome had made for herself Vindobonda, and for us Vienna. One of the Holy Cities, last seat of the Empire. In place of so many crucifixions a place of delight. A fountain of wit and sweet laughter, Anatol's town. . . . He was saying:

'So you know? Of course you know. Why shouldn't you know? She died. She died. Now you know all there is to know, Anna Perenna. I'm glad you know. For now you know all there is to know about me. For her agony hasn't redeemed me – it's made me a maimed cad. A spiteful liar. A man too hurt to use his gifts, who takes his shame out in miscalling other men. I'm not a man. I couldn't protect her; I was caught in the Army with the rest. I was so sure as I went strutting about; and, though I call myself a Christian and a Catholic, all the time I see another god, something very old, with a filthy leer who likes hurting people. He's had his joke – he's still having his joke on me.

'But you are not laughing, Anne. . . .' He flung himself forward and

A Lover

laid his head down on her knees. Her fingers touched the little drakes' tails of soft hair along the pale cleft of his neck.

* * *

This time it was Alec who sat at Anne's feet, looking up like an affectionate and enthusiastic dog.

'Wonderful the change you've made in Alan. We're doing a Sunday show' and you ought to have seen him at rehearsal. Understudied Biron, and again at the last minute had to play. His body doesn't fit, but he made it. The sword and ruff did what they should and often don't, and helped him; and he forgot what he does when he's nervous and goes all stagey – took a flying leap into the part, and you saw little Alan Courcy turn Renaissance lord. It went as though it had been sung. – The young Shakespeare, working up to a hell of a climax – stuck in the rest of the play as an excuse for that outburst – and Alan was his rocket. Going up and bursting out on top with stars. You should have heard him, mounting his speech:—

*"But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain . . .
In valour is not love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?"*

– 'And when he came to the persuasive solemn bit at the end:—

' "*For women's sake by whom these men are men,*" he spoke it like a gay prayer. His English is naturally very pure. A little pernicketty – after all, he's part French; but when it comes to a show like that and the classic stage, he's got it where he wants it.'

'I wish,' said Anne, 'I'd heard.'

'I wish,' said Alec, 'you had. For,

at the end, my dear, he was praying to you.'

'Not to his memories?'

'Well, it's been you who've treated them so as to make them fit to pray to,' said Alec sturdily. 'Besides, he's told me as much.'

* * *

Again Anne was very pleased, with the appeasement of nerves that comes to many women, aware that through them has come consolation, a certain order and proportion, ability set free. Pleasure that, when Alan came to call and tell her about it himself, came with a sensual stab.

The spring came too with its wave of green fire, and they became lovers. Even, at his suggestion, marriage crossed her mind. His family encouraged her. His mother especially, his French mother, the elegant old lady, anxious, ironical, profoundly observant and attached to her son. Exhausted too, as Anne noticed, with a life-time of dealing with him. Did she understand him? Did she not? Was she *au fond*, wise, or did she suffer from that vanity, that essential blindness of the parent that seems to the lover so shocking and so hopeless? Anne asked herself that, when she saw old Madame de Courcy was as much amused as impressed. Impressed she certainly was and thankful, with even a touch of hope that in itself sounded like a warning. For every time she heard her say: 'Anne, child, what wonders you are doing with my son,' Anne could hear, undertone and overtone, fear and something like derision. A little afraid for herself, she summoned the lover's faith. Again, whatever he was, Alan

Mary Butts

had the trick to make her passionate and to make her laugh, two things sufficient to fly away with judgment, and she knew it.

She was the fountain at which he drank, bathed, adorned himself. With altered step he had begun – she saw it and his mother endorsed it – to ‘*move about the house with joy.*’ Yet she soon noticed one thing – that he never bought her anything but cheap flowers, and these with excuses she did not expect about poverty which she knew, within that range of expenditure, did not exist. And, though he was always at her house, he rarely took her out, and then with the same excuses. It was queer. Then one evening he told her that he was on the track of a sister of the Austrian girl who might still be alive, and putting aside every penny to help her if he could find her. Well and good, but it occurred to Anne that a possible wife could hardly be asked to share for ever such an excess of economy.

And when he spoke of this his voice grew shrill, the small lithe body flung itself about; he would wander about the room from chair to chair, find nowhere to rest. This progress she knew, and that it ended in quiet, his body flung down again at her feet, his head with its soft blown hair come to rest on her lap.

But that evening, after trying the fourth chair, he got up again and, apropos of nothing, cried out: ‘Why should I bring you presents? I know I’m supposed to bring you presents. Convention demands it. I sent her presents, money, all I had. I went without the decencies of the other men in my mess and she never got them.

They never did her any good. You’ve got everything you need. What can I give you? My rotten life to pick up. Fine gift that, my Anna –’

She took this quietly. It seemed to her inevitable that it would come to a struggle between the dead girl and herself. A struggle that, for both their sakes, she must win. That it was fair for her to win. The little Babette would not mind. Was not going to be allowed to mind. She waited till he had done and said:

‘I wish your French logical mind would run through what you’ve been saying. What *are* the parallels? And when did I ask you to give me presents? Only there comes a time – a way – when the dead must bury their dead. It’s the only way to keep them properly alive. Otherwise they’re apt to stink. You say you’re a Christian and a Catholic, and you know our authority for that. Only just look at the sense of what you’re saying. You’re not to give me presents (for which I’ve never asked) because once (under tragic circumstances) you made them to someone else who didn’t get them; all bolstered up with cant about convention and lies about me. Alan, dear –’

‘Anna Perenna sits there, the Moon-Woman, and talks about logic to the Man in the Moon! But I earned that, I admit. Oh! I’m a nasty bit of work. No one knows how nasty –’ He came across, took her by the throat and began to kiss her:

‘Doesn’t she know I must punish her for being so lovely and so wise and for purging the cad out of me?’ As he thrust her back among the cushions, her body began to relax, and he lay beside her, nibbling her lips – ‘Best

A Lover

French logic' – and heard her laugh from her throat. Then, in silence, close together, she heard lovely words, murmured but distinct:

*'A la très chère, à la très belle
Qui remplit nos âmes de clarté –'*

And a moment later, as if to himself: 'Go away Babette, my dear, your time's over.' 'To Paradise,' she whispered, drowsed and trembling at his touch. The long couch in the room where the spring wind stirred held them easily, and his presence shut out everything but the wandering airs and the talk of wood-pigeons high up in the trees.

* * *

A few days later he said: 'Let's go to the Ballet. We must to-night. I've got the seats.' Anne agreed. Before she started she looked at the programme. There was to be a new one, called 'Le Beau Danube'. She remembered what she had heard about it, that it was written round the Danube waltz, with one exquisite heart-breaking *pas de deux* for Lopokova and Massine. (Critics had called it a sentimental return, but those two could never spoil anything.) Then that Alan must know; that he meant them to see it together for a kind of *adieu*, a last salute to the past.

She met him and they went to their seats. They were not very good seats. While a little worm of observation coiled in her mind suggested to her that, if she offered to pay for hers, he would be pleased. So, preparing for some sort of crisis, hoping for a finale or some revision of their relation, she sat quietly until the curtain rose.

There is still power in that sweet

tune to make the shattered children of the after-War world weep. Not because they love like that, or that they would like to love like that. One of the recurrent love-moods of humanity that our society at the moment has no use for and no response. Only, as presented by the two great dancers, one of tears. In that Ballet there is nothing but their dance, when the passionate modulation before the end is worked out by their bodies, in a rapture based on sweetness, based on grief. A voiceless song accompanied them across the empty stage. They were dancing the death of their love, but the song said accompanying: 'This is Vienna's death.' As he lifted her and she mounted in his arms to the passionate air, the heart of the youngest of all ancient cities was broken with their hearts. A dance that lasted ten minutes. It took several years to kill Vienna; several centuries to make Vienna. And all these three times were the same time. Nor are we used, like the ancient world, to the death of cities, who have married civilisation each with a ring of their own, which cannot be made to fit another hand.

It did not seem necessary to compare their thoughts. They sat straight side by side, each in a precinct of pain and of delight. Watching a dance of love, love when it is nearest to death. Death of Vienna. Death of Anatol. Death of Saki's Clovis and Comus Bassington. They were dead. They were dead. Had those dead boys found any Paradise in which to go on playing? (Was it a spoiled Anatol she had sitting beside her?) As the curtain came down, something said 'No' distinctly.

* * *

Mary Butts

The next was the *Boutique Fantastique*. Alan did not want to stay. 'Not after that, Anne, please.' Anne wanted to stay, because she loved the *Boutique*, because it was something like bad discipline to run away, instead of tuning-in to another kind of joy. A better kind perhaps of a very different best. 'Stay and laugh,' she said. She often gave in, but this time she did not want to give in. Or when Alan began to sulk, damn well mean to give in. 'Alan, stay and play.' 'Play!' he cried out, turning his ravaged head: 'my play died with that. Why should I stay? Tell me that.'

She said coolly: 'Because of courage.' For a few moments he stared down. 'All right,' he said at last. The curtain rose again. She leaned forward, ready to lose herself. Not quite. Aware from time to time of a fleeting look he gave her. Of the kind a lover would rather not see.

When they had left the theatre he said: 'I wonder how long it will continue to amuse you, going about with a corpse? Can't you see, you blind woman-thing, that I died when that died?'

'The answer is that I should dislike it very much. Only I'm not and you haven't.'

'You're like all women – you only see what you want to see. And what you want with me, God knows? I can't even ask you out to tea. I'm sorry to be so poor, but the tickets cleared me out.'

She knew these pettish fits. At first she had thought to tease him out of them by a cheerful generosity, and for a time it had seemed that she *had* teased him. This afternoon it suddenly palled.

'I am going home to tea. And I'm not going to ask you because it's my housekeeper's day out, and I have to get it myself, and it's such a strain putting an extra teaspoon into the pot. Besides, think of the expense.' The Tube Station was mercifully near. She knew he was hesitating behind her. Would he dash after her as he had sometimes done, and penitent, eager, exceedingly forgivable, laugh at himself? Explain all over again: 'I come all over beastly about money because of *her*. Because she couldn't spend it.' This time he did not follow. She reached home unhappy, vexed at the stab of – worse than pain – of contempt that nagged at love. The love she thought they were making, and which she could never be utterly sure if it were still-born or not.

The tiny crisis passed. It seemed more and more as though she had accepted to marry him. Not that there was any hurry. Then one day they were together at her house when the news came that Alec was ill. It was really bad news. He was going on tour, to play lead. He could not go, and when he recovered he would be out of work. It was possible that if an expensive treatment were given instantly, he might be ready. Anne got out her passbook and looked at it thoughtfully. Did sums. Then asked Alan if he could help to make up the right amount.

'We owe him a bit, *mon ami*. No two people had a better friend. Besides, he is one of the very few who will pay back and pay back quickly.' She had not time to be horribly afraid before she heard Alan saying:

'Twenty pounds? My dear girl, I'm afraid I can't do that.'

A Lover

'But, Alan, it's only a loan, and a short one. You've told me your income. You've no real expenses. You're living at home——'

'I'm out of work, if it comes to that.'

'My dear, you could have gone touring with Alec. They wanted you; he wanted you——'

'And leave here – you – this?'

'As you like. But don't call yourself out of a job.' The usual fatuity followed: 'I thought you wanted me to stay.' She made the obvious reply:

'For myself, yes, of course. But for you, and a bit for myself – don't you understand – I want to see you act.'

He said with a sneer:

'And play second lead to Alec.' There was a nasty silence. Then he began to tell her witty stories of life on tour, and left her, promising to go home and see what he could do. Left her reflecting. He had said no more. He *had* changed his tone. Perhaps he had seen for himself what it would mean if he did not help his friend. Anne wrote a cheque for her part, and went out on the far harder business of persuading Alec to take it.

* * *

The next day she went to Kensington, to Alan's house to tea, alone with his mother. A visit now become a custom each week between the old woman and the young. The ritual was that Alan should appear later to take her away, dine with her or take her out to dine. Still Anne could not determine what the old woman thought. Was it her French training, ignoring what she could not

prevent? How far was she in her son's confidence? Were they together – uncomfortable suspicion – using her for a medicine, a cure, a prophylactic against something worse? (Stupid. Of course they were. Exactly how much?)

How much *did* he tell her? Anne smiled and blushed. Well, old Madame de Courcy was the right sort of mother to be told that.

They had tea in the garden. The old lady began cheerfully:

'Alan will tell you when he comes. He won't have had time before. It's sad that your poor friend Alec is so ill, but they've offered Alan his part on tour; and, thanks, my dear, to the way you've encouraged him about his work, he's accepted it. He says too that he's sending Alec something to help pay off his illness.'

Anne stared at the grass. A caterpillar on a blade stood up on its green tail and waved a black head at her. Two worlds, caterpillar world and man world, looking each at the other. Anne thinking man thoughts, the caterpillar caterpillar thoughts. So Alan had sneaked off and stolen Alec's job. (Innocently she was responsible. She had told him about his need and about the tour.) On such conditions the loan she had asked for had been given. Alan would have the work and the pay and the fame, if any. And be paid back the money he had invested, which had obtained him these things. He, the spoiled gentleman actor, too good for this and too gifted for that. The bitterness that is the reverse and the measure and the proportion of love welled up dreadfully in her. The amateur had robbed Alec, Alec who

Mary Butts

gloried in his profession. The profession Alan gloried in being too good for – the fine art of the actor – picking and choosing and turning his back on the mill to which Alec offered his body for a grindstone.

(And how had he got the job? Was that the way the money went? Was it possible? She only knew that anything is possible.)

Madame de Courcy was looking at her:

‘Have I distressed you, child? I mean, do you not want him to go? Of course you don’t, but you’ve always been so sensible and intelligent in wanting him to work; in seeing what his work might do for him. Only it has been a shock, the separation – I see. I have been careless. But if you only knew, my dear, how I have come to rely on your courage. It has not always been too easy to be Alan’s mother –’

(‘Tell her? Tell his mother? Why not? She would not understand by herself, and she’d better. And if she’s a cheat also, I shall know. Those last words of hers sounded sweet. If they were, then she’s worth truth; and if she’ll stand the truth, Alan won’t quite get away with it. . . . Besides, I’m so angry, it’s bound to come out. . . . Lovers can’t be cads. . . . How dare he do that to love?’) Hoping piteously that Madame de Courcy would understand, grimly prepared for an explosion of mother-love, she said:

‘It is not that, *maman*. It is because Alan had no right to do that.’ She explained with her head averted, her eyes on the caterpillar, now gathering itself up, head to tail, in a loop, and

shooting forward its own length, to wave a moment and repeat. Very neatly done. As if, too, it was showing off. Alan liked to show off. ‘*I am a worm and no man.*’ She began to look hard across the garden to a tree, the tree in French called Golden Rain, most beautifully in bloom.

– ‘You see, it takes away one’s respect that he should do a thing like that. And how can one keep love without the honour that goes with it? I mean, I can’t. And forgive me the priggishness.’ To her great comfort, Madame de Courcy’s voice reassured her:

‘I see, my child. Of course I see. Yes, I am glad you have told me. It is as well to face these things.’ Blessed French mind, accepting things as they are; keeping values intact and pure.

– ‘I quite see that he has done wrong. And what it means to you – For you have tried. We have all tried. . . .’ (Anne thought: ‘Even if she would be glad to be rid of me, this woman is honest. Not a touch, thank God, of “my son, right or wrong”.’) She heard her say:

– ‘I think we will speak to him when he comes in. – And yet –’ Their eyes met and both women nodded.

‘You mean, *maman*, that it might put him off acting for ever if he is told not to be a cad and to leave this?’

‘Yes, I fear that. You see, I know – oh, how well I know! – his perverse mind. Presently he will be saying: “You made it a point of honour when I had the best chance in my life that I should not take it.” . . . You can imagine what he would make of that.’

A Lover

'You are absolutely right. Dear God, how difficult it is -' And from the mother's face she understood what a lifetime of it had been.

'*Réfléchissons-nous*. And what perversity it is again that you should have so stimulated him - for this.'

- 'It has always been like that. From his childhood. - How often I have been unhappy. Feared, too, for the woman who - how do you say it? - should tackle him. But except for *amourettes* with the lower classes and with, shall I say, *grues*, he avoids our sex. Always it must be one who is paid to please.'

Anne sat up sharply. Of course he was that sort. All the horrible things, as is their way, were coming out at once. If she had not been drugged by the Vienna story, she would have known that. Now it was intolerable with what distinctness she could see him making love to a girl of easy virtue from the corner tobacconist. And did he get his cigarettes free? Reaction was making her beastly. He called her Anna Perenna. Moments of exquisiteness flashed back, flashed past. Flying things, coloured and winged, to lie preserved only in the amber of memory. She heard herself saying in a sensible voice:

'While we must always remember the Vienna business. To have lost one's first young love like that. When a thing like that happens, there is always something final about it. Something for which one must have extraordinary patience, extraordinary understanding. After which, heaven help us all, perhaps we can never expect much.' Madame de Courcy interrupted:

'Vienna, my dear, what was that?'

'Why, about the little Elizabeth, about Babette.' ('Perhaps he didn't tell her. That's nonsense. He tells her everything.'

- 'Babette Cosmas he was engaged to and who died so awfully.' ('She is staring at me. This is like finding a person you supposed a Christian hadn't heard of the Crucifixion.') Clearly and distinct she was being answered, plain words within the range of cat and dog and no and yes.

'Babette - bless our hearts - why should he say that she is dead? Or that he was engaged to her? Yes, they were a family. we knew very well, in Vienna, just before the War. Charming people - she was a good deal older than he was. He made a few calf's eyes at her as a boy will. Engaged? She was engaged already. Married when we left and managed to spend the War with her baby in Switzerland. They had property there. They managed to get through all right. I still hear from them occasionally.

'Child, you were angry before. Now you are white. What is it? Speak out. We have not kept secrets from one another.'

As Madame de Courcy spoke it seemed as though, instead of trees flowering and new grass and borders opening with flowers, they were sitting in a place that was a desert pocket, full of clean dry stones. In the middle one large stone, like an idol, called The Truth. Why had she been calling the place a garden, when actually it was made of dry stones? Bones among stones. *Can these stones live?* Instead of the heart's desire a stone. All this time she had been serving the image of a love which

Mary Butts

had not been there. The moon had come to Endymion; Endymion had got the moon down under false pretences. After all, the moon is a stone. Who was it called the moon a 'numinous stone'? In the centre of everything, instead of the heart's desire, there is a stone. It then occurred to her that she now saw the stone because she had wished for truth. Truth in love. No love without truth. There was singularly little consolation in it.

'I will tell you the story Alan told us,' she said. 'The story that was his passport, through Alec, to our society. To me most of all. The story we wholly believed.'

She told it, the passion and death of Elizabeth Cosmas. Which had not taken place, whose shadowy and metaphysical existence had so affected her own. Told with its details; the money Alan had sent, the things he had gone without, the money he hoped to send. His mother listened quietly. At the end she said:

'There was no one like that; no one of whom that story could be true. Nor was he in the Army for more than a few months at the end. Clerk's work at some base: his health alone made a commission out of the question. On that account I never suffered the least anxiety. "Then," I remember, Alan said to me once, quoting one of your modern poets: "*I must find a gesture of my own.*"'

'He seems to have done so.' The old woman waited a few moments. Then she said:

'My dear, I have one question to ask you. From you I know I shall hear nothing but the truth. Can you for-

give him? If you do not yet know, say so; but I believe it to be one of the occasions when if you look in your heart you will know the answer.' Anne did not hesitate at all: all anger apart, the mother was quite right. She knew the answer, as if it were prepared for her.

'No', she said.

'I understand. With you it is inevitable.' Anne nodded. The old woman stared down the garden, in which she also saw no more flowers.

'It is not necessary for me to say that I am sorry that my son has done this to you.'

'Done it to love. If I stayed till he came and we taxed him——' Anne went on staring; both women thinking the words he would say: 'I'm glad you've found me out. I'm glad I've been exposed to you. Now you know exactly and for keeps how vile I am.' Roll himself in his poisoned shirt, till she too was fiery with the prick of his disease. Now there was just time to escape. No gifts at home to remind her. Half an hour would purify her house of the memory of him.

She picked up her long gloves. No need to hurry. The gods had this in hand, and she had already escaped him.

'Good-bye, Madame de Courcy. Thank you for all your *gentillesse* to me.' She walked across the green grass which had turned to stones.

'What am I leaving her alone with in this garden? Something she did not know before. Thrown him back on her? I had to. Leave him to her. What have I to face — some pain and more shame? But if she were not his mother, she would no more forgive him than I do.'

The Applied Science of the Next Hundred Years

Biological and Social Engineering

by Julian Huxley

IN the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, those who wrote about the future concerned themselves mainly with the reform of human institutions. They saw the evils inflicted by tyrannical, ambitious, or merely stupid monarchs, or by a corrupt priesthood, and they thought that if they could but remove tyrants and priests, the resultant liberty would solve the problems of humanity. When they reflected further, they evinced a touching faith in the perfectibility of human nature: simply provide humanity with universal education in the shape of knowledge, useful art, and moral precept, and humanity would automatically grow up wise, capable and virtuous . . .

Later, during the heyday of the industrial period, the tone changed. Visionaries began to think of the future more in terms of increased control over nature. If only men could learn to fly, to travel under water, to communicate at a distance, to store up pictures and sounds and movement, as in camera, phonograph and cinema, to have an ample and varied supply of

power and food and raw materials, to stamp out the germs of disease, to make this or that concrete achievement, all would be well.

Both these hopes were falsified. Liberty from tyrants has given us the tyranny of democracy with its vote-catching and its political bosses. In place of religious persecution we have the liberty to believe any nonsense whatsoever. Universal education has demonstrated one fact above all—that the majority of people are not capable of profiting adequately by the education with which they are provided. The marvellous inventions of the last hundred years have made life more varied and interesting, but also more complicated and more difficult.

Most striking of all, at the end of a single century of time which has done more to effect the control of nature than had the two thousand years before it, the world is in a mess of more than ordinary magnitude. The ills that affect civilization to-day do not come from outside; they derive from man himself. Nobody can accuse a jealous God or a wicked Devil or

Julian Huxley

even a grudging Mother Nature of producing scarcity when there is an unexampled excess of all foodstuffs and raw materials, or hardship when every kind of convenience and luxury can be easily manufactured. In economic affairs, it is the economic machine erected by man himself which has got out of hand. We know the causes of disease, yet permit insanitary habits and quack medicines. We know perfectly well that armaments, high tariffs, and over-population are injurious, yet allow the spirit of nationalism to keep them all going. And so on and so forth.

What I foresee in the near future is the rise of a new branch of applied science which for want of a better term we may call biological and social engineering. Rule-of-thumb methods combined with a little common-sense and energy made it possible for men to bridge a ten-foot stream or construct a simple hut. But to produce structures like a modern skyscraper or the Washington Bridge, expert knowledge and calculation is required. Long years of experimentation and testing must have gone into the production of standardized materials, whose precise tensile and compressional strength is known, whose margin of safety can be calculated. Mathematicians must have worked out formulæ for the stresses and strains in the different parts of different kinds of bridges and buildings. Technicians must have been trained in the employment of various special methods and materials. The engineer-architect must be educated so as to be able to apply the stores of tested knowledge to the particular problem in hand. Without

scientific knowledge of materials, rigorously tested theoretical calculation, and skilled technique, no achievement of modern engineering would be possible.

We, however, are still attempting to apply pre-scientific methods to the organization of modern society. Such hit-or-miss, rule-of-thumb, and vague abstract principles worked well enough when man's affairs were on a smaller scale. But to-day, when all the world is interlocked and the tempo of life has been enormously speeded up, they are not only inadequate but dangerous: there is always the risk that the structure will collapse as result of its own ill-regulated growth.

Let us try to see what are some of the lines along which we could develop a true science of biological and social engineering. In the first place, we must have a scientific knowledge of the material which we have to employ – in other words, human nature. The earliest ages worked by pure rule-of-thumb. The Egyptian kings and priests had not worked out any elaborate formula for inducing the bulk of the population to irrigate and cultivate and build temples and pyramids for their benefit: they just found that under a certain political and religious system they could successfully do so: Later, abstract general principles were introduced. These are of two main sorts – principles of equality and principles of inequality. Principles of inequality attempt to justify the exploitation of one human type by another. Many Dutch South Africans justified their exploitation of the native population by reference to the Bible and its remarks about the

Applied Science of Next Hundred Years

children of Ham. The ordinary attitude of a conquering white race to a coloured race whose territory it has invaded is guided by the belief that coloured people are automatically inferior. The attitude of the rich to the poor in early nineteenth century Britain was based on the assumption that the poor were by their very nature ignorant and depraved and so destined to poverty. The current superstition in Anglo-Saxon and German countries about the inevitable superiority of the Nordic stock and the feeling in the United States about the inherent inferiority of 'alien immigrants' are all examples of such principles.

Principles of equality, on the other hand, were laid down in the American Constitution and the French Revolution. They make the sweeping assertion that all men are born equal. However much dishonoured in practice, they have had enormous influence in shaping political forms of democracy all over the world.

To the scientific eye, such general principles are miserably inadequate. What is needed is accurate tested measurement. Such measurements, of physique, temperament, intelligence, constitutional proneness to disease, vocational aptitudes, special gifts, are now being made on a large scale. The methods of measurement are still far from perfect: but already we are beginning to see certain concrete generalizations emerging. In the first place, far from all mankind being born equal, there is a very great diversity in the outfit of possibilities which they receive at birth. But secondly, far from whole classes or

nationalities or races being intrinsically inferior or superior, each such group has a great range of difference within itself. There may be differences of *average* between groups, but even a group with marked belief in its own superiority will always have a large percentage of men and women who are inferior to the better products of the groups which it professes to despise.

Such scientific measurement of human nature is just beginning to find successful application in certain spheres, notably in industrial psychology, in education, and in the administration of justice. Children leaving school after having their various aptitudes measured, can be given valuable guidance as to their future vocation. Applicants for industrial posts can be selected not merely on looks or letters of recommendation, but partly on the results of their performance of various tests. Not all workers are equally liable to industrial accidents: it is now becoming possible to forecast, though still only roughly, the differing liability of different people to have accidents happen to them.

In education, physical measurements and medical examination often reveal some cause – in defective eyesight or hearing, adenoids or bad teeth, or merely in defective feeding – for poor class-work; while intelligence tests often give help in assessing the true ability of children. Similarly, psychological tests in courts of justice are being more and more widely used to help judges decide what treatment a prisoner shall receive, to prevent stupidity or feeble-mindedness being punished as if it were wickedness, and high spirits

Julian Huxley

receiving the same treatment as brutality.

But this is only a beginning. At the moment we still tend to think of education as the forcing of a set of facts and rules and ready-made ideas upon all alike; of a job as simply a contract to work for so many hours for so much pay; of prisons as places in which to dump and punish a special brand of human beings known as criminals; and so on.

As the idea of biological engineering spreads, attention will be focussed more and more upon the development of the personality. Anyone with any knowledge of psychology realizes how intensely complicated is the business which we all must go through with, of developing from infancy through childhood and adolescence to adult life and maturity, and how very badly it is bungled in most lives. If we could see minds and souls as we can see bodies, we should be appalled at the spectacle of our modern so-called civilized humanity. The great majority of minds would be seen to be of stunted growth, a large proportion to be distorted or crippled in one way or another, and a not inconsiderable number would appear definitely monstrous.

We know that a great deal of this mangling and dwarfing of souls is the result of the events of childhood, but we are only just beginning to work out ways and means for preventing this waste. Often the parents are at fault — sometimes through harshness or coldness, sometimes through over-indulgence, sometimes through complicated blends of egotism and jealous affection.

We can be pretty sure that fifty years hence a much more scientific

technique will have been worked out for ensuring the smooth and rich growth of the young personality, without saddling it with inferiority complexes, mother-fixations, unconscious repressions, over-sensitive or over-harsh consciences, irrational pervading fears, and all the other incubi that now too often beset it. We can also be pretty sure that parents will no longer be allowed such freedom or such ignorance in bringing up their children. Whether there will be compulsory schools for parents, or inspection of homes, or whether a great deal more of the child's early life will be spent under the supervision of experts, it is impossible to say; but the State will assuredly not allow the present waste of latent possibilities and energies to continue, any more than it now allows people freedom to spread infectious disease.

Nor will it allow the waste of possibilities engendered by the fitting of square human pegs into round holes of jobs, nor the casual falling in and out of work which is so devastating to the morale of the worker. Biological engineering will begin with the premiss that human beings are the most valuable asset of a nation, and human development the most important process of manufacture, with an elaborate technique to be mastered.

The technique is all the more elaborate since mass - production methods alone will not serve: human beings need also to be treated as individuals, with individual methods. This applies not only to early upbringing and the choice of a job, but also to school education, to medical treatment, and to leisure activities.

Fifty years ago electrical engineer-

Applied Science of Next Hundred Years

ing was in its infancy: it would have been impossible for the most valiant of prophets to have foreseen the state of affairs to-day – the complexity of electrical machinery, the new types of electrical action that have been discovered, the laboratories and colleges given over to research and teaching in the subject, the permeation of everyday life by electrical appliances. It is equally impossible to-day to prophesy the exact future of the infant science of biological engineering as applied to the development of individual lives: but it is certain that here too vast reserves of power will be tapped and brought under control, and that everyday existence will be permeated and transformed by the results achieved.

When we leave the individual for the population, the scientific engineering spirit is equally necessary. Primitive societies usually kept their numbers roughly constant by rule-of-thumb methods concerning marriage, sex-abstinence, abortion, or infanticide. If they multiplied rapidly, they were either killed off by disease or hunger, or overflowed to conquer fresh territory. Then came the period of abstract principles. Adam Smith, the great pioneer of modern economics, laid it down as self-evident that the first test of a successful country was a steadily increasing population: and this idea is still at the back of most men's minds. Precisely the opposite view was set forth by Malthus – that poverty and misery were automatically produced by increase in population: and this is held as an axiom by many supporters of the birth-control movement.

Again, however, neither view is correct. The truth is that for any par-

ticular level of scientific and technological attainment and each particular social and economic system, there exists an optimum level of population. The United States of America to-day would obviously be under-populated if they had ten million inhabitants, and equally obviously over-populated if they contained a thousand million.

At the moment, although our scientific knowledge would enable us to feed and care for a much larger population than now exists, yet our economic system has rendered the capitalist world temporarily incapable of dealing with its present population. Until we can discover some way of restoring purchasing power and social usefulness to the millions thrown out of work by the improvement of machinery, we shall be over-populated.

Meanwhile, there is the opposite danger. Birth-control is spreading so fast that the population of many nations will shortly begin to go down. In all the industrial countries of Western Europe it will begin to go down within twenty years; even in the United States, unless something quite unforeseen occurs, population will reach its turning-point within forty or fifty years. It may go down much too fast even for our present type of social organization: and if in the meantime we have reformed that system, we may find the civilized world much under-populated – and this just at a time when the black and brown population of countries like Africa and South America will in all probability be rapidly going up.

The remedy for this is to make the regulation of the number of people in the world the object of scientific study and control. Instead of pretending

Julian Huxley

that birth-control does not exist, or of denouncing it as unnatural or obscene, or of lauding and encouraging it as always desirable, we must accept its widespread practice as a fact, and see whether it cannot be used in the interests of society.

It will be realized that the population can be adjusted to economic systems as well as the economic system adjusted to population. The pressure of population will no longer be regarded as an excuse for a country to embark on a career of conquest. In addition to an International Population Bureau attached to the League of Nations or whatever substitute for the League will then exist, every civilized country will doubtless have a Department of State devoted to population problems, and birth-control clinics, properly supervised, will form a very important branch of the Public Health Service.

But it is impossible to consider the quantity of population apart from its quality. Some people are born talented, others are born morons; some inherit a healthy constitution, others inherit deformity or liability to disease. The United Kingdom would be a very different place from what it is to-day if its average level of intelligence were that of the stupidest 10 per cent. of its population – and very different also if it were that of the ablest 10 per cent.

The social engineer will first have to realize that the average quality of populations can and does change. For one thing, it changes by emigration: through emigration, Ireland has undoubtedly lost an undue proportion of types possessed of initiative and the

love of adventure, just as has the English countryside through the drift to the cities. It changes by immigration: the American population has changed its character through the preponderance, in the decades before the War, of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. But most of all it changes by differential reproduction. The French-Canadian stock has been rapidly spreading westwards in Canada because of its higher birth-rate. During the nineteenth century the whole face of Western Europe was altered because the English and the Germans multiplied faster than the French. At the present moment, in all the countries of Western civilization there are strong indications that subnormal stocks are multiplying faster than talented stocks.

In the second place, social engineering will have to take account of the fact that changes both in the quantity and the quality of a population are closely linked with the economic and social system of the country. Dr. R. A. Fisher has recently pointed out the very important (and also very depressing) fact that any system which, like ours, is based on commercialism and individual competition, is biologically bad, because it automatically leads to a decrease of fertility among the more successful members of society. Qualities making for success are progressively sterilized, generation after generation; the effect is cumulative, so that after a few centuries the average of intelligence and initiative is seriously reduced. The collapse of older civilizations like the Roman, the Arab, the Spanish, may well be due in large part to this cause.

Applied Science of Next Hundred Years

The social engineer will have to set himself to think very hard about ways and means to prevent disaster, by counteracting such tendencies. When taxation schemes are put forward, they must be considered not only from the point of view of balancing the budget, and for their effect upon industry, but also for their effect upon reproduction. At the moment, for instance, there is no doubt that high income tax is reducing the number of children precisely in those stocks in which the birth-rate ought to be kept up.

In the same way a policy of free education for the mass of the people but of high educational costs for the professional classes has an effect upon later generations which is the reverse of eugenic.

Again, a flat wage-rate for all, whether single or married, with or without children, has really the effect of putting a premium upon childlessness. Just as birth-control practice and propaganda must be looked after by society if over-population is to be prevented, so, to guard against a rapid decrease of population, society will have to take charge of economic measures which will encourage larger families when and where necessary. Perhaps some large-scale and drastic system of family allowances will be put into action. Perhaps the capitalist system itself will be altered by reducing the individual profit motive (as has already been brought about in Russia, though by methods which seem not to be suited to the Western world).

In any case, social engineering will be very busy over problems with which society to-day has hardly begun to

concern itself – the effects of business and government and education and public health, in a word, of all economic and social measures, upon the quantity and quality of the race. Complementary to the Department of Population, we shall doubtless see established a Racial Health Service on equal terms with the present Public Health Services (which, be it remembered, are themselves of very recent growth).

I spoke earlier of optimum population. This leads on to all kinds of questions of scale. Scale is vital in engineering. The stresses and strains are quite different in two bridges of identical plan but of different absolute size. Size may have a limit. For instance, the proportion of elevator-space needed in a skyscraper increases with the number of stories, until finally – unless new methods of vertical transport are discovered – it becomes uneconomical to build any higher, even though mechanically it may be quite possible. The same is true in biology: no land animal with a bulk anywhere near that of a whale could exist: above a weight of ten tons or so, increased size becomes a handicap.

We need to apply this principle in social engineering. Is it really economical to encourage cities to grow indefinitely to five millions – ten millions – a hundred millions? Is large-scale mass-production in industry a universal magic formula, or is it only suited to certain kinds of goods? It appears, for instance, that the canning of vegetables and fruit can be carried out more economically, and with results of higher quality, if done in moderately small units close to local

Julian Huxley

sources of supply than in huge factories which must draw their raw materials from a huge area. Again, when invention is rapid, a small automobile factory may be more flexible in improving its models than one built on such a vast scale of mass-production that the cost of any change is prodigious.

This kind of problem is of course already being considered by the more foresighted leaders of thought and industry as an aspect of what it is fashionable to speak of as Planning. Whatever else of good or bad the Russian Revolution may have achieved, it has succeeded in putting across the idea of large-scale planning. We can be sure that the Russian Five-Year Plan will be succeeded by long-range plans of various sorts in all the civilized countries of the world.

Political and Economic Planning, in fact, is one very important aspect of social engineering. A great deal of nonsense has been talked about planning in the last few years, but the important fact is that it is being talked about at all; for this means that people are at last waking up to the realization that political and economic systems will not work of themselves, but need as much hard thought and hard work and conscious planning as does the building and marketing of a new type of automobile, the successful accomplishment of a piece of scientific research, or the construction of a hydro-electric plant.

Planning will doubtless first take effect in economic affairs: but without doubt it will eventually invade the political sphere. Already in Russia there is a State Department of Planning: doubtless other countries will

follow suit. As a further effect of the application of the scientific spirit to affairs, we may prophesy the disappearance of the politician as we now know him. By the year A.D. 2000, doubtless no one will be allowed to meddle in politics without long training and passing severe tests, and to be a politician will mean possessing as high a professional standard as that of a qualified medical man to-day.

What I want chiefly to emphasize, however, is that planning, in the sense in which that word is generally used to-day, is not enough. It is extremely important to town-plan our cities, to rationalize our industries, to guard against exaggerated slumps and booms in the domain of finance, to make provision, through co-operative marketing, production quotas, import regulations, and what not, for a steady flow of agricultural products and a healthy farming industry, to adjust our currency to a flexible world-system, and so on. But this alone is only one aspect of biological and social engineering.

In the long run it is equally important to plan for education, for health, for self-development in adult life, for the intelligent use of the steadily increasing amount of leisure which will be available in a planned society, for quantity of population, for racial improvement.

In the Greek myth, Prometheus suffered martyrdom at the hands of Zeus because he had given man control over nature by bringing down fire from heaven. To-day, mankind as a whole is suffering the fate of Prometheus; but its sufferings are self-inflicted. Some people lay the blame

Applied Science of Next Hundred Years

at the door of science with its discoveries and inventions and urge a return to a more primitive simplicity. The real trouble, however, is that we have been scientific in some of our affairs but not in others. The cure for

the ills of the scientific age is not less science, but more science. And the science that is most needed at the moment is that of biological engineering.

Lotus Land

by H. J. Massingham

I HAVE always suspected that to be a castaway on Lotus Land would be a fate as penal as the more orthodox one of being cribbed in a dungeon, or, in contemporary usage, a concentration camp. A land where it is always afternoon, which everybody knows to be the most tedious part of the day, is a province of Avalon where falls not rain or snow . . . and Avalon is a more up-to-date equivalent of Elisium, which in its turn was descended from the sky-world of the Egyptians, governed by the sun-god. Perhaps this was the reason why the Hades of the ancient world was so well watered by rivers – to this day I remember the old tag about the six rivers of hell – and it was the sun-god who supplanted Osiris, the spirit of water, the deity of the Nile, and dumped him in the Underworld. The imagination of the western world became dominated by the idea of paradise as a cloudless land over which, with the regularity of a bus route, day after burning day rode the imperial tyrant in his chariot of fire.

Actually, it was a base ingratitude for our own poets to borrow the classical conception in displaying the sweets of their Avalons and Lotus Lands. The English school of Nature Poetry, justly more celebrated and longer lived than that of any other

country, is pre-eminently a *genius loci*: it takes its inspiration from England and it is Osiris, not Ra, water and not sun, which has made England what it is. Before he applied the gold paint, Tennyson had to dip his brush in Styx. The prodigal hedge-rows, the shining flowers, the enamelled meads, the singing birds, the gardens of delight, this poets' playground has been the gift of clouds, and in England the sun has always behaved as a constitutional monarch should behave and not at all like a despot of the East. There is not a blade of grass in England which does not bear witness to that truism. When the poet reclines upon a couch of them and gazes heavenwards towards bright Phœbus in his strength, dreaming the while of that other Eden where his face is rarely as in this demi-one obscured, he forgets Osiris, the life-giver, whom Ra to our infinite benediction exiled to this land of mists. It is a fact of history that when Ra ascended the throne of Egypt, her annals became dark with blood and turbulence, fierce with predatory desires, and as was the sky-god to the land, so became the Pharaoh to his people.

So much English poetry and perhaps something of the mysticism of English thought and of the more endearing quality of English character

Lotus Land

have been born of those mists that I want to try and prefigure what is to become of the English soul now that the England of Vaughan and Keats and Wordsworth has perished. Something is happening to us because of a new terror from the air, a terror less violent and catastrophic than that threatened by vultures of metal to tear our living flesh, but more insidious and, because it affects our relationship to nature and the unfathomable mysteries behind nature, it may be more deadly. What man has made of man and, yet worse, intends to do with man, makes and promises to make a tragic enough chronicle. But it is not one which need logically affect our sense of association with the cosmic mind, which not only rejoices in order and beauty and their universal validity, but informs the human mind with a conception of them. Our English genius has with few breaks been prone to approach this ultimate unity through nature, which means that province of nature functioning under English skies, a nature totally unlike that sovereign among the plains of India or the highlands of Peru. Whether our insular view is tenable or not, we do think of universals by way of the medium we are familiar with, and that medium is the nature expressed in terms of English skies and English soil and all that grows and creeps and runs thereon and flies above it. That nature possesses its own peculiar form of beauty, and it is likewise one which has been warm to our visions, benevolent to our labours and friendly to our daily lives. Fanatical neither in summer nor winter, it has by its moderation in all things set us an example of tolerance

and so of understanding. Its graces have been more congenial to the poetic mind than the splendours that accompany frenzy and havoc. When Enobarbus praised the infinite variety of the eastern queen, he personified the native quality of English days and years. Its very caprices have been the source of our privileges and blessings, and by a perpetuity of contrasts and transitions between them we have been enabled to avoid that monotony which sours good into evil. Thus, though it grieved the heart of Wordsworth to reflect upon what man has made of man, he could authentically turn from a spectacle so melancholy to thoughts made greener by the living world about him.

This was the English nature and the English weather, nurse of poets, consolation to all but those from whom towns and machines had stolen their birthright, which, but a very short while ago, have abandoned us, whether to return in our life-times no man can surely say. In palæolithic times the Sahara was the most fertile belt of North Africa. If a similar and sinister aridity is beginning to steal upon our grass-green oasis in the western seas, it will be with profounder fears and more to lose than meat and drink that we shall scan the heavens, like the primitive hunters who watched their game retreating and lay down to sleep, footsore and parched from a quest for water more intent than for herds. For eighteen months the climate whose unstable moods nourished us whole, body and mind, has yielded to a despotism of frost and wind followed by sun and wind. It has imposed a uniformity upon us such as in the

H. J. Massingham

social and political sphere prostrates the spirit of men on the mainland of Europe.

It is only the countryman who knows how radical is the change from the time before the English sun became a tyrant on the Persian model and robbed of their powers his parliament of clouds. He remembers how, in May, bardic lord of the months, the fields that should have worn the dress of 'glad light grene,' so diaphanously fresh and gay that they repeated the ancient hymn of the resurrection of life, those Renaissance meadows which had never failed us from Chaucer to Bridges, carried the rusty look of harvest. Looking over those sere fields, unrefreshed by winter rains or April showers, he saw a thousand poems die. In early June he walked by hedges choked in dust, among wild flowers half their length of stem and span of petal, past ashes with many a bare bough, oaks with their bronzy fine new leaves strangled at the birth. Before the year had reached its zenith, he strode on marshy land seamed as though by an earthquake and hard and dour under his feet as the road he had left. The reeds that once clothed the dry watercourses with their lustrous blades were dead or dying. At midsummer I walked along a lane that on one side was still fed by a trickle from a spring on the hill. Here the vegetation was normal and so to my eyes a Bacchanal of growth because it reminded me of something we have lost. But the other side, being solely dependent upon rainfall, showed the grasses withered before seeding and even the cleavers had stopped climbing. There were buttercups on one side of the

lane, only their leaves on the other. Even the nettles had lost all but their top leaves and stood with ragged pennons under bare poles. The embankment was infected and all the countryside seemed to ache with a sense of calamity. Though the incorrigible optimist declared that the shortage of water meant less for the beer and so they would make it stronger, another voice, if the wit was a little clouded, was more representative: 'Oh, isn't it dreadful, this drouth! I dig in the garden and the soil's like cinders and there isn't enough suction even for the poor worms. I can't think what we'm have done to upset the Lord.' The price of livestock began to fall so heavily in the market since the heat had sucked the goodness out of the grass that the farmers said, 'we shall soon be able to buy a cow at Woolworth's.' When the bleached bents were piled and shaped into ricks, they were as slippery as ice, and the men could hardly keep their feet. Came a gust of wind and the air was thick with chaff.

What the farmer has suffered in sapless and starveling crops, exhausted and contaminated springs, sheep and cattle that turn his thoughts to Pharaoh's dream, and labour diverted from the fields to the endless burden of carting water from the sinking rivers; what the labourer has suffered in the more precarious conditions of his service and the grudging responses to his toil; what the country-lover has suffered in looking out over England's no longer green and pleasant land — these griefs have been perhaps less poignant than the gardener's. He gathered peas that were old before

Lotus Land

their coming of age, wizened and yet but just swelling, the first peas of the year that tasted like the last. Like little old men they were, yet childish; infants, but worn out with suns. His lettuces shot to harvest, his beans failed to set their bloom or went to fibre faster than he could pluck them, his roots and tubers were flaccid with malnutrition, and his cabbages windowed with black fly. His seedlings either pined away or rushed to a hectic fruition weeks before their appointed date. Their growth sliced across that slow curve of ascension and decline on which the collaboration of sun and rain bestowed the true rhythm of ripening.

But the fate of his flowers struck him more closely. His annuals made inches for their customary feet and bounded into seed at a time when former years would have been fostering their buds. So brief were the successive dynasties of plants that their histories resembled those of the Roman and Persian Empires at their most convulsive periods. His delphinium spires, that were wont to maintain a glowing city of blues and mauves and lavenders for an enchanted stay of six weeks, after three days required the knife. The red hot poker had gone ashen at its base before its apex had come into flower. The perfection of the rose became a dream of the past. When it unwrapped its tender linen, its edges were bitten away by fly and earwigs, and in less than a morning it was overblown. The doctor – for all gardeners become medical officers – who could contrive with a plant of his to flower a week was taking honours in horticulture. The very bees were stupefied

by starvation, and lay inert in the flower-cups until they were lifted out of them. Only a select few of the thousands of modern species of cultivated plants had ever experienced a persecution from the elements so relentless and unrespite. The rainless and frenzied winds not merely snapped their stems, broke off their heads, loosened their roots and dried up the dryness of the soil; often in their most berserk mood they tore the seedlings out of the ground and sent them bowling along the grass. The teachers in the schools forgot to tell the children that it is a controlled and tempered sun which is the fount and inspiration of life. In all the records of archaic nations kinged by the sun-god, a something maleficent, cruel and war-like appears in their annals as soon as he becomes the pantheon's dictator. So it has happened with our English sun, once the mildest of monarchs who blessed his land as much by his absence as by his State occasions on the throne. No sooner had he come to take the kingly business more seriously than blessings were bleached into curses. The creator was transformed into the acquisitive egoist. His greed dragged flower after flower from its sheath and immediately threw them away for others, as Cambyzes forced his dancing girls to gyrate and gesture before him until they were carried away unconscious. The Phoebus of the madrigalists has thrown away his lyre and loosed his arrows from their quiver. Never was there in England a robber who so dissipated the treasures of the earth, losing by his very lust more than he would have gained by more persuasive manners. So he would blanch the roses of their

H. J. Massingham

colour before they were well in bloom, and suck up the deeper moisture of the soil with a greed that deprived him of his richer prey of flowers. No longer in this foreign country of England do any but fools bless the sun. The gardener will think of other flowers the tyrant cannot hurt – the tortoiseshells that pulse their wings upon the stone-crop and the goldfinches that flutter upon the cornflower heads to peck their untimely seeds. They, too, are flowers that vanish, but not into death.

Science warns us fallible laymen against anthropomorphizing the natural world, a pictorial trick which is such a boggy to the scientific method that in its turn it almost personifies the evil thing as the Scarlet Woman of its creed. Fortunately for the colour of life, the human mind is so incorrigibly dramatic as to take very little notice of this particular scientific commination. Having deified or demonized, humanized or allegorized natural phenomena and natural forces for at least five thousand years, it will not be pedagogy which will get us out of the habit. And the way things have happened in the recent revolution of English weather has made it almost impossible for even the most dispassionate of students not to make an heroic tragedy of it. Our human emotions are too deeply engaged in watching the transformation of our traditional England that it appears sheer penury of imagination to adopt the scientific temper in recording it. We have realized as never before in the vanished days of equable alternations between heat and chill, sun and rain, whose very fickleness was a democratic defence against tyranny, how radically

our fears and desires, not to mention our livelihood, were involved in what has seemed to us so unnatural a uniformity. Because we are not used and so resigned to it, what an eager new interest is begotten for us out of the pageantry of clouds! Bitter experience has discovered for us that they are nearly always only bags of wind. Yet a cloud has become an event, a holiday from the monotony of a blue heaven and a respite, if a pitifully inadequate one, from our efforts to mitigate the fiery torment upon our vegetation. We are so tired of seeing the sun go down like a piece of gold plate put away from a manorial dinner that we accord a freshened welcome to that variety of sky which streaks the baleful rays into thin sheetings of beaten metal, or cuts up the sky into an archipelago bosomed in an ocean, calm as the seas of the Fortunate Isles. At least our Lotus Land looks more graphic thus than wilting beneath the recurrent theme of blue and gold. Or when the cumulus clouds were billowed into monster masses, we would feel ourselves in the presence of a mighty Byzantine architecture, plumed with Oriental influences. True, Pelion piled upon Ossa meant nothing but showmanship, and soon the gorgeous palaces came toppling down like Troy Town and left not a wrack behind. Still, it was spectacle, and it did suggest that the devouring sun was not having it entirely his own way. The sight of a lowering black cloud with its sullen roll and heavy contours became more to us in the pleasure of the eyes and faint hopes of what it might bring us than months of fabular blue. We have looked to see the skies embattled as

Lotus Land

the burning days have made us long
for night: —

‘O Stars and Dreams and Gentle Night,
O Night and Stars return!
And hide me from the hostile light
That does not warm, but harm.’

Our flawless skies have not only been a menace, they have been like a picture by Marcus Stone, hung in perpetuity over the mantelpiece.

Whatever the meteorological causes which have banished rain, the greatest benefactor of our history, from this island — and one suspects that the official diviners know as little about them as we do — it has been plain enough how the process works. As one observes it tiresomely re-enacted over longer or shorter intervals, the anthropomorphic faculty takes inevitable command. Some wandering Imp, prowling after mischief, espied this crystal of the west. Envy the green fields, the springing multi-coloured flowers, the fat kine and abundant pastures, the myriad gems which the kindly skies hung from every blade and leaf of their well-beloved, the Imp resolved to make his quarters in the land, choosing as his main citadel that particular fragment of it where I happen to live. The clouds, as is their English way, brought their wonted fleets and caravans from sea to shore and from shore to the expectant countryside. No sooner has the Imp intelligence that the procession is on the way than at once he looses his Storm Troopers, the winds, upon it. The willing clouds do their utmost against this savage onslaught. They brood longingly, they send reinforcements, they may even succeed in dis-

charging a fraction of their precious cargo, which is our very life. Time and again have I seen this same battle joined, the earth darkened under the elemental strife, the cloud-breakers massed into one cumulative charge and the lightning flickering from corner to corner of the heavens. But times without number the issue is the same, the winds prevail, the clouds are dispersed into straggling fugitives and no rain falls. The winds are too highly disciplined both to respond to the Impish summons and to fall with irresistible fury upon the columns of relief. Sometimes the latter are so heavy-laden with blessings that the whole sky sags with the burden of them, and is nothing but a vast grey sack of treasure. But the wind is too much for them. Battering the wretched trees, levelling all more delicate growths, making the whited bents of the field hiss under its speed and howling like a true minister of the Imp, it leaps pardlike at the sky. The slow starvation begins again, the blighting and the mildewing, the fevered flowering and the swift decay, until the green thought in a green shade, that most English of thoughts, becomes to us nothing but a gleam from the literature of escape.

Where I live it has not rained consecutively for three hours more than once in a twelvemonth. But very rarely, and by a kind of desperation, the clouds have broken through this devilish conspiracy and, hurriedly dropping their balm, have departed in undignified haste. Once, the benedictive shower lasted for seventeen seconds and once for nine seconds. But I retain a tenacious memory of a

H. J. Massingham

time when it rained for a quarter of an hour without stopping. I happened to be in a country pub listening to one of the company giving his reminiscences of an old fellow who 'played contrabass in the orchestra' and, as he added, 'reared up the notes like fried bread.' Suddenly we all heard a queer rustling, a susurrant as of poplar leaves hitting against one another. I went out into the porch and the fantastic thought that had sprung to my mind was verified – it was raining! I stood in the porch and drank in the heavenly sight, but still more the heavenly smell of it. Not all the congregated flowers in all the nurseries could have wafted a scent so poignant-sweet. The pleasure those falling drops gave me was so intoxicating that it was like all the joys of my near fifty springs rolled up into one ball. From some cobwebbed corner of my memory I be-thought me of lines that had lain neglected for perhaps a score of years, but at that moment rose up from their trance: –

'To Mary Mother praise be given
That sends the gentle rain from
heaven!'

I had only a road and the hedge beyond it to look at, and at the fag-end of day, listless, rheumatic with excess of sun, and yet it assumed the clarity, the honeyed freshness and childlikeness of a scene from Chaucer. When I returned to the tap-room, the whole company was transfigured. Tongues wagged freely, men laughed, we stood each other pints, our faces shone and with something more than visions of swollen peas, hopeful marrows, the bravery of beans and onions for once

rewarded and of the thirsting hay, for as one of us truly said, 'if there's no hay, there's nothing for nobody.' We talked rain, rain, rain, like a lot of children let out of school. We rose to the top of life like corks, there was a head upon our spirits. We were swept away into a common, a universal rejoicing, knowing that all good countrymen rejoiced with us, all beasts and birds and every living thing that once was green. For those few minutes the blade of sedge, the dangling peapod, the proud lily, the lean heifer and the grass it fed on, weed and flower and the snail that lived on both, man and mouse, were united in an organ-crash of sympathies. Did Sassoon write, 'Everybody' or 'Everything suddenly burst out singing'? he was a great poet if it was the latter. Then it was all over, the magic moment, the clouds rolled away and the dull, the deadly dull, serenity of the azure vault was restored. The Imp's discomfiture was brief. The burning earth licked up every drop and still that aged and wrinkled face seemed to gasp for more. The next day, the inches-wide fissures in the lawn, the ashen touch and appearance of the soil, the yellowing basal leaves of the plants, the seared grass, the pinched annuals, the head-long seeding – all were as they had been before the relief stores had reached us. It was many a long day before the Imp was caught napping again, and by that time nothing less than the Biblical flood could have saved the year.

If this alien weather seemed to the countryman's harassed mind to act with an un pitying hostility, and the hot winds that accompanied it to be

Lotus Land

driven by a vindictive savagery, it did not mean that they conferred no beauty upon us. Nothing endured its cruel ordeal better than the winter-sown corn, feeding with its root-fibres below the drought level. But every semblance of warm blue-green was drawn out of the straw of the loaded heads of wheat, so that it shone among the foothills a dazzling whitish gold, with the oats a waxier softer sheen beside them, and whiter still. I stepped out on to the terrace one night to see all the fields about me alabaster under a thick blanket of fallen snow. The illusion was complete, but actually the effect was caused by the lifeless bents having been drained of their sap by extreme and prolonged aridity. Early in May, before the grasses were blanched, the maddened winds would turn the meadows into an angry sea of green with the tips of the blades flashing like foam, the crests billowing and drifts of spray flying as the wind veered. The tossing manes of the grasses rushed in successive waves over the green sea, dashing against the hedge-row, but ever restlessly renewed. Never, again, have I known such a year for apple-blossom, for hawthorn and chestnut bloom, and for such a profusion of keys hanging from the ashes. Such prodigality was utterly dissimilar from the shy revelations and delicate intimacies of English country. Magnificent ostentation as it was, it was little more than that, for the trees were soon smitten with blight, eld and exhaustion, the hedges gaped with spindly growths and the fruit-trees were raped of their harvest by the ferocity of the summer gales. All this beauty had something violent and

barbaric about it: it had little enough to do with the familiar graces of the English land, nurtured by the variable but steadfastly favouring virtues of the English climate.

There are none who love a fine day as Englishmen do, and they earn the derision of the natives in hot lands because of the way they expose themselves to rays which tropical faiths mythologically represent as both creative and destructive. They gibe at their rains and twilit winters which make their land the greenest in the world, and glorify the majesty of the sun because it has always shone upon them with forbearance and discretion. Now those values are all overturned, and we sing with the witches, 'Fair is foul and foul is fair.' A month of cold unspairing rains would mean more to us now than all the weathers of all the versions of the Earthly Paradise in print. A radiant morning so prodigal of light that it spills over through our blinds and curtains opens a day of weariness, anxiety and loss. It deflowers the gardens, poisons the waters, unleashes the plagues, shrivels the harvest, dulls the landscape and burdens the spirit. At last we transfer our dues of praise to our sister, Water, and very late we realize how wise were the predynastic Egyptians to make water the great life-giver. It was when their politics went wrong that they enthroned the sun-god, but Osiris, the sacred incarnation of water, has survived in the memory of man for more than five thousand years without a stain on his character.

But more important than these immediate reactions will be our philosophical readjustments. Our almost

H. J. Massingham

instinctive sense of the unity between nature and man has suffered a rude shock. In the old days, the best friend we ever had was that particular brand of nature, elemental and organic, settled to our fond fancy permanently upon our islands. Jungle nature with its extremes of contrast, the nature of the desiccated steppes with its rigid uniformity, the polar nature, harsh stepmother to life, echoed distantly to our knowledge, but never intimately touched our experience. If our own home-nature was not invariably so amenable as we arrogantly expected it to be, it was neither seriously nor for any length of time estranged from us. Now it is good-bye to all that. We have to recognize a dualism in this nature of ours wherein the elemental is in hostile alignment to the world of life. We have to turn our minds to the nature diabolized in *King Lear* rather than to the rough playmate which to the early Shakespeare could only shake up the darling buds of May, even though in *King Lear* Shakespeare was suffering under the persistent English delusion that storms and deluge are an inimical force to us. And this novel perception of the natural elements being at war with natural life and growth is rather like finding out that the most dear and the most trusted of our human contacts have betrayed us. Hitherto, man has worked in England (and of that lovely co-operation was born the Wordsworthian vision) with the elements on his side. Now he works with the elements martialled against him, not merely in long spells, but persistently and without respite. The traditional English countryside, a work of art, a

masterpiece that has slowly taken shape from the joint partnership of man and nature, has now to reckon with another dragon than progress and the profiteer, one which rides upon the wind and shoots fire upon us from the skies overhead. 'When my Lord's head is filled with dew and all His locks are wet with the clear drops of night' – to that blessed and holy nature we have had to say farewell.

Nevertheless, the final reckoning is not so implacable as was implied in the words of a very shrewd, kindly and well-tempered man who is foreman of the local nurseries: – 'This is something we can't fight against.' The view of any man associated with a horticultural firm in days like these is not unnaturally jaundiced. The worst thing that any living man can feel is that all his efforts, however manful, ungrudging and intelligent, are so much waste labour. Such resignation might be the first psychological reaction from being deserted by the gracious weather which has for centuries gladdened the poet and the ploughman. But the private gardener – and most Englishmen, living as they do in the garden of Albion, are private gardeners – knows better. If Uranus is divorced from Ge and no longer brings fresh showers for the thirsting flowers, what heroism have we not seen in that other world of nature which can never be alienated from us, the kingdom of life! The brave, the indomitable struggle of life against the elemental wrath is something that compensates us even for losing our climate. In May I transplanted some lilies months too late from an old garden to a new. The ground was so hard with drought

Lotus Land

that they had to be wrenched out of it with no soil round the bulbs and roots, and there is nothing that a lily hates so much as disturbance. They had to be carried a quarter of a mile and, because of the severe cold, planted without water. All of them arched their slender forms in sickness and for five days in succession after the operation they had to withstand night-frosts, one of them of ten degrees. Yet

these lilies bore flowers in June. It seemed to me that those frail trumpets made a grander music than that of roaring winds, blue skies and thoughtless stars.

In the response of the living to adversity, and countless examples have I noted, lies a philosophy as warm, as wide and as lofty as any the changed face of elemental nature has forced us to give up.

The Children's Bread

by F. Mary (Mrs. Clement) Parsons

WHEN our surprising great-grandparents sat down to their surprising meals, how did our infant grandparents fare, how were their tender digestions protected against catastrophe, and did their allotted portions conform to their preferences or solely to a decreed regimen that, in spite of having been prescientific, may have been sufficiently wholesome? The scarcity of records that might settle these questions seems curious, since taste, the sense earliest awakened, is also the sense nearest allied to the 'eldest, strongest of the passions.' Hogarth, Zoffany, Devis provokingly abstained from portraying families with children of various ages at dinner. Had they not, we might have learned the detail of the eighteenth century laid table including its *couverts d'enfants* and three excellent artists would have given the lie to Johnson's dictum that painting can illustrate, but cannot inform. Zoffany's 'The Family of Lord Willoughby de Broke' does indeed depict a little girl, one of three, laying a trespassing hand over a cake dish on a lightly spread tea or breakfast table. The mother's head is turned aside, but the all-seeing, 'period' father, complete in gold-laced scarlet waistcoat, lifts a deterrent finger. Among conversation pieces, and always

excepting the family meals of Carl Larsson, this only slightly apposite situation may well be unique, for Chardin expended his genius on the isolated child eater.

Nor has literature ever taken much account of the mental reactions of well-nourished children towards mealtimes. Here is a subject rich in practical and psychological interest, yet no book, thick or thin, appears ever to have been devoted to it. Such paucity of notice is no doubt partly due to the general disregard accorded to the Very Young by them of old time. Not one Biblical reference leaps to memory, save a repeated mention of children's disillusionment concerning grapes. It was left to 'St. Charles' to imagine his dream-child a lover of grapes replacing a bunch he had abstracted from the dish when he listens to the tale of how an earlier boy, dream-father to him, took greater delight in the 'busy-idle diversions' of the Blakesmoor garden than in the flavours of peaches, nectarines, 'and such like common baits of children.'

In ordinary homes menus are imposed from above with (except on birthdays) no choice on the part of the child. Should he protest or state approval, 'When I've done this can I have some more?' or (in a Boxing Day

The Children's Bread

letter), 'There are peasants for lunch so must say good-bye,' he runs some risk of being stigmatized as 'greedy', though usually the epithet is a misfit, for a child, like a dog, ceases to eat when he has eaten enough. Wise Lewis Carroll did not see Alice as a greedy child because she 'very soon finished' the drink that had a mixed flavour of cherry tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffee and hot buttered toast. He knew that at the period when sight is keen and hearing sharp the palate is sensitive. A child's concentration on his helping of cherry tart is not more resolute than his absorption in a story-book; intensity of response to each of the stimuli that successively fill his day is the way of a child.

Gastronomically, my own childhood was unfortunate, my reminiscences being principally made up of memories of distasteful puddings. At midday, at their lunch, my parents lived on boiled foods and expected me to do the same. I loathingly remember boiled 'hand' of pork with pease pudding; boiled sheep's head served whole; boiled calf's head served whole; boiled rice, a ball in shape, accompanied by 'moist' sugar; boiled currant dumplings, wet and whitish outside, drab within. I abhorred suet. I was a fatter. I shared all children's dislike of rice.

Sometimes we ate sweet macaroni pudding, an exclusively British abuse of macaroni. I found no interest in salt cod, its egg sauce always proving a disappointment. Boiled mutton with parsley sauce, boiled beef with turnips, Irish stew - all were savourless - since my elders avoided onions - and all were similar. Apparently, boiling was deemed a form of cookery more

innocuous for family consumption than any of the brown treatments that whet appetite by their sizzling scents. 'May I give your little girl some of this white shape?' said a hostess to my mother when we lunched out, whereat I hastily interpolated, 'Thank you, I don't like mould.' I believed I was offering a softening explanation of refusal, but, as everybody laughed, I was steeped in a wave of shame comparable, I imagine, to the shame of the well-bred chimpanzee who, lunching out, clapped his hands and cheered at the sight of a dish of cherries, and then, because the company expressed amusement, covered his face and refused to eat one cherry.

Broadly speaking, children cling to the familiar and resent innovation. At home, the little boy had not seen roast pork accompanied by apple sauce. Taken out to lunch and afterwards describing his experience, he observed, 'They had pudding with meat.' Rather differently, a young family lunching out refused bread sauce as bread and milk at an incongruous hour.

A child's genuine enthusiasm is for slight breaks in routine. Princess Antoine Bibesco, in a reminiscence of childhood published in a recent miscellany, speaks of 'luncheon with Lord and Lady Manners, where there was always icing sugar instead of ordinary sugar.' Cutlets in paper bags, eggs on spinach, bloater paste sandwiches, dessert in place of pudding, tea at a tea-shop, meringues (sometimes spelt *myrangles's*) at tea greatly please. What is there about meringues that endears them to the race of children? Their scrunchiness, in part, but also their standardization. Make the filling

Florence Mary Parsons

currant jelly and the young visitors let you know the change is no improvement. Unexpectedly supplied with Stop Me bricklets, a party of little bits chant, 'Ice cream is the very best food in the world.' 'What's breakfast, Daddy?' 'Cold grouse and eggs. Spoilt child of luxury, will you have a slice of grouse?' 'What does it taste like? Oh, I know, it has a black taste. Yes, please, I like it.' Few silences are more charming than the primitive silence an eyrie of children preserve during the early stages of a spread they later describe as 'super' or 'beefy.' Yet a child no older than five can think of two things at once, and, expectant of mid-morning orange juice, murmur while fitting together a four hundred piece jigsaw puzzle, mostly sea and sky, 'I wish the orange would come!'

Children are not above boasting to other children of grand home ways. 'We have ham every day at breakfast.' 'So do we.' 'We usually sit up till eight and have soup from the dining-room for supper.' 'So do we.' 'We have Gorgers Only cheese with live things in it.' The last instance reduces the competitive child to a change of topic. When first old enough to stay downstairs for dinner, a state known as 'having supper up,' children are proud and joyful. Having sat mute for some time, a scrap of a thing, five and a half, heaven in her wild flower eyes, asks, 'Can't I have sausages sometimes?' Capella thinks sausages are beautiful.'

Children enjoy pretty kickshaws akin to toys, such as red-shelled eggs at Easter, red jelly in sections of orange peel, lemonade through straws. This is why animal and alphabet biscuits and gingerbread ladies find a welcome

denied to osborne and petit beurre biscuits. Cracknels are reckoned abominable mouthfuls of flour, and I recollect, in an aunt's house, I about nine, my disgust at finding cracknels, filled with jam, set on the table as an accessory lunch dish. Specially delectable macaroons used, in the same remote age, to be purchasable in Hanway Street. Better still, one could stop in Villiers Street before a cave-like shop whence a vanilla scent of *gauffres* cooking over charcoal wafted across the pavement and watch the maker, a Frenchman, dredge icing sugar over the finished products, half a dozen of which one carried home, hot, in white paper. In a glass-roofed emporium, called, I think, the Crystal Palace Bazaar, at Oxford Circus, where in the gallery a piano played continuously and mechanical birds sang, one bought pink or white pop-corn, made freshly with a gas jet for each customer. Opposite this bazaar was 'the only restaurant suitable for ladies shopping.' Those were Spartan times.

Prodigious pains are nowadays taken to secure children a balanced diet, never forgetting 'citrus fruit' and watercress. A dietary dated 1776 survives that prescribed for George III's children, for breakfast 'milk or a basin two-thirds milk and one of tea, moderately sweetened, and dry toast of the Statute bread.' Breakfast at half-past nine, dinner 'from three to five,' supper at half-past eight, on Mondays no supper. Dinner, soup, 'when not very strong or heavy'; any one plain meat with clear gravy and greens; or fish without butter; 'at the second course the fruit of the tart without crust; peas or what other simple thing they

The Children's Bread

choose.' At dessert on Sundays and Thursdays ice 'of what sort they choose'; coffee on one of those two days and one glass of any sort of wine. Except for the occasional coffee and wine and the long interval between breakfast and dinner there is nothing to censure in the princes' and princesses' diet-sheet. In ultra-salubrious schools of to-day, where children body-build on uncooked carrots, three meals a day are once more the done thing. It may be that the ancient crimes of boarding schools, underfeeding and innutritious feeding, are not even yet extinct, for, recently, a schoolgirl on announcing to the gym mistress just before gym that she 'felt so hungry' was brusquely advised to get a drink of water and tighten her belt, while a father and mother (this instance also dated 1934), on an observation tour of prep schools, being invited at one of them to lunch with the boys, found a meal consisting of watery mince accompanied by pyramids of potatoes and platterfuls of bread and followed by milk and water tapioca pudding. Too few proteins, too much starch, and the consequence was that two tender juvenals were entered elsewhere.

When a Kafir father helps his son to mealies the child reaches out both hands in testimony to liberality. The idea seems religious and recalls Her-*rick's A Child's Grace*. Time was when before repasts the child of the house was called upon to gratify the table by recital of the two-word grace that goaded the Franciscans into inventing '*franciscus franciscat*.' But domestic ceremonies have melted away and the youngest person present has ceased to be appointed vocal intermediary be-

tween Blesser and blest. Quite likely he himself has acquired sufficient liberty of thought to distinguish between what is seemly to say grace for and what is not. Film-goers who saw the adaptation of Léon Frapiés's *La Maternelle* will remember the incident of the sobbing refusal of the school children to have the rabbit they had stroked and fed killed for their dinner.

Children early feel the pull of the macabre, whence emerges from time to time an inquiring too shattering to be solely ascribed to their well-known tendency to go on asking questions in order to hold up the stream of events. 'Is this beef I'm eating?' 'No, leg of lamb.' 'Do you mean the same lambs we saw playing in the field?' 'Not the same; but some lamb.' 'If that lamb came into the room now would he know it was his leg?' 'No'. 'But if he did, what should we say?'

At the farthest remove from Cross-jay Patterne's description of himself and his seven brothers and sisters as 'All hungry!' is the child who, though up and about, refuses to eat, or refuses everything but wedding cake, or refuses everything unless he is first perched on his pony, or adopts any other method of creating self-importance or expressing hostility by refusal of food. Various ways of tackling such a child are recommended by specialists. Bertrand Russell favours an assumption of indifference, the reverse of the usual anxious coaxing, concerning all actions a child ought to perform spontaneously. He cites his own little boy who in the nursery had been persistently wheedled into eating. 'One day when we had him for his midday meal he refused to eat his pudding, so we sent it out.

Florence Mary Parsons

After a while he demanded it back, but the cook had eaten it. He was flabbergasted, and never made such pretences with us again.' (*On Education*, p. 137.) Offhandedness is a useful instrument.

In view of the endless modes of presenting the staples, bread, mutton, bacon, sugar, apples and milk, why should children be coerced into eating any form of food specially distasteful to them? There must be less stupid ways of teaching self-mastery than to struggle for two years with a family of three in the hope of conquering their aversion to the skin on hot milk, a process related by the German writer, W. Stern, as having occurred in his household (*Psychology of Early Childhood*, Eng. Tr., p. 448, 9), with, as he frankly states, only qualified success. 'Self-mastery was the final result, but the aversion continued undiminished.'

When young creatures picnicking call corned beef pemmican its perfunctoriness is forgotten and they are nourished they care not how, for next after hunger as sauce comes romance, known to Stevenson as Child's Play, and to the modern school (a trifle cumbrously) as the fantasy-percept built by apperception and remembrance out of objective fact. In a child's world, beauty, humour and badinage are near relations to romance. A small girl looks at her plate of strawberries and cream with enjoyment. 'Dark red and white together, they are lovely,' she says rapturously. 'A pity to eat them!' Then, laughing, pushes in the spoon; and another day, when her nurse interposes, 'Euphrasia, you have had enough cherries. Give me the plate,' replies, 'No, no, I am like

Daddy, I can't bear waste.' No wonder child-friends clustered round Dodgson, who liked, he told them, a little mustard with a bit of beef spread thinly under it, or brown sugar with apple pudding mixed with it, or salt with some soup poured over it to keep it from being dry.

Too fastidious to endure the skin on hot milk and set retching by the lines,

'Busy, curious, thirsty fly!
Drink with me and drink as I:
Freely welcome to my cup' . . .

children are tremblingly fascinated by images of disgust. There was a friend of my family, an Arctic voyager, Sir John Richardson, very old when I was born, concerning whom it was whispered to me, a young child, that he had become a vegetarian ever since he once was compelled to eat human flesh. I recall the faintness, an actual sickness of heart made up of awe, compassion and horror, that oppressed me after this revelation, causing repeated imaginary rebuildings of the hateful episode. Conrad, in *A Personal Record*, tells how he suffered, when a child, similar distress from a not dissimilar story of starving men. The dog 'was large.' . . . 'He was eaten. The rest is silence. . . . A silence in which a small boy shudders and says firmly: "I could not have eaten that dog."' And his grandmother remarks, "You don't know what it is to be hungry."

While adults get 'up' from meals, children, long after the age of high chairs, get 'down'. Table manners have kept pace with the progressive civilization of meals. Implements of nursery eating have refined, and no

The Children's Bread

cherished children of 1934 need the advice given in Hawkins's *Youth's Behaviour* in 1635, 'sometimes to look off the meat, without wishly looking on the meat before others.' Yet in many a nursery the right carriage of the fork remains misunderstood, the concave side being used for transport of a mixed load.

The heart, we know, has reasons of which reason knows nothing, and Thetis, aged ten, out at tea among oldish persons and replying to 'Indian or China?' 'Indian, please,' illustrates the aphorism by murmuring to a confidential grandfather next her, 'I said Indian because Mum and Daddy are in India.' Children are apt to say they don't like a dish they have never tasted either because they don't care for its name or because a negative is easier. A tiny boy entertained at tea proves a specializer in audacious refusal. 'Bread and butter?' 'No, thank you.' 'A sandwich?' 'No, thank you.' 'Try

cake!' 'No, thank you.' 'Nothing?' 'I only said "no thank you" to tease you,' he observes benignly, stretching his summer-brown hand towards sandwiches.

Hawthorne, in one of his letters, states that, when a child, he thought mothers lived without eating as well as without sleeping, a dangerous piece of sentimentality. On every ground it is well for families to be together at some of the meal hours because children unconsciously acquire experience of life through the general intercourse of the table. Cobbett, busy man though he was, always found time to talk with his children. The child first downstairs in the morning sat on his right at dinner. When himself a child in his grandmother's two-windowed cottage, he had fared on milk and bread for breakfast, apple pudding for dinner, a piece of bread and cheese for supper, and been thriftily admonished to 'bite his bread and smell to his cheese.'

The Widower's Son

by Francis J. Kelly

JERRY DOYLE stepped out of the mourning coach at the main gate of the cemetery, limping in from the edge of the path. His legs were 'dead' from the knees down. On the journey he had been squeezed in between his father and a stranger, the latter of amazing fatness, which spread itself out over the seat as if the clothes were inadequate banks barely able to contain the flesh they covered: body like a squat barrel, legs like tightly packed sausages. Jerry grinned at the image and even at the 'pins and needles,' proclaiming the return of circulation in his legs and feet.

A grin. It was like a flag hastily waved from a beleaguered citadel, a sign that the boy of fifteen still survived notwithstanding appearances. He leaned heavily against the stone pediment of the gate, a listless, long-necked, long-legged figure. The grin faded out like a sputtering lamp in the dawn, leaving his brown eyes dark and serious, his mouth hanging. For the rest, he accepted his present state of almost ludicrous helplessness without a sign of protest as the natural development of the events of the past few weeks. Beginning simply enough as a startling puzzle, they had developed stealthily, reducing him, ere he was aware of it, to a mood of passive in-

difference to everything. His senses were numb; even as his feet were at the moment, and thus rendered impervious to the hard, scorching pebbles under them.

But a short while ago and he would have resented with all the boyish vigour natural to his years the irksome restraints laid upon him, but now he accepted them passively; new black suit, stiff collar, painfully new shoes, chafing his heels. He shrank within them as a timid knight in a suit of armour, or as a snail within its shell.

Peering around. How different the whole place looked this morning, yet nothing was changed. All the familiar sights were there that he had so often before glanced at casually and thought all right, especially on a bright sunny morning like this. Yet to-day, standing outside the gate through which the hearse went at a gallop, he felt the strongest possible aversion from entering. The pleasant playground of other occasions now showed itself a place of grim finalities. The squat, grey stone office inside the gate; the small cruciform mortuary chapel, farther in among the dark green trees, stood out stark, proclaiming their business; even the grass was reduced to a mere green cover for death's table. Away out and

The Widower's Son

above—all these strained the round tower, white as the clouds in the sky, which it seemed to threaten.

Dully he glanced down the road. The usual string of vehicles was there: mourning coaches, a few taxis, and cabs with decrepit horses and thread-bare drivers – a collection of rags and bones. Compared with these last, the undertaker's men cut quite a dash in their furry tall hats and mouldy looking coats. Merciless, the sun beat down, gilding the shabby trappings of death as if to make them ridiculous. From the groups farthest away came now and then a sudden squirt of laughter.

Against the grey stone wall crouched a few women in shawls, with baskets of apples and oranges, flat brown cakes and bottles of ruby-coloured minerals. Many a time Jerry had regaled himself from these same baskets – this morning the mere sight of their contents nearly turned him. But then he had been barely able to gulp down a cup of tea, much to his father's undisguised annoyance, who had eaten a very hearty breakfast, and a few minutes later, with the bread-crumbs and traces of egg and grease on his lips, had answered a neighbour's condolence with a mournful shake of the head and something about 'the light has gone out of my life.'

Scarcely noticed at the time, nevertheless the words had sunk quietly into his mind like the eggs of some insect, and, now recalled, they swarmed buzzing in his head as annoying as a cloud of midges impossible to beat off. Silly, meaningless, out of some sloppy love song or other, he supposed. *The light* – how it shone on the gilt figures and hands on the blue face of the clock,

and the braid on the blue coat of the official so stern, looking under his peak cap, to whom the driver of the hearse handed a docket. Never before had Jerry taken any notice of him.

Not the sort of song he and mother sang together last thing at night when he slept in her bed – only a kid then. A long time ago it seemed now, but a few years really, and yet he could not recall a line of them. Sitting up as high as possible in the bed, fighting sleep – hated going to sleep, did still, morning came so soon – he used to join her in singing songs, mostly hymns, though. A thin, sweet voice she had, sad somehow, like a robin's in winter. Try as he might, it would fade away from him as he sank down, down, holding on to this silver thread of song, growing fainter and fainter, until it ceased in darkness soft as velvet.

Like so many straggling sheep, the people moved in twos and threes along the pebbly path to the church, where the hearse already stood. A stumpy structure of grey stone, the tall white tower so near it dwarfed the church to little more than an enlarged tombstone. The high narrow windows seemed designed to keep out any light that might try to peer through the chill gloom of the interior. The mourners, shuffling in and settling themselves at the *prie-dieux*, looked like figures in half-relief on a fresco of shadow. What light there was gathered round the brightly varnished coffin, shining on the brass plate and handles, as if to protect it from the sinister shadows, cold and gloomy.

At the head of the coffin stood, silent and solemn, the tall grey-haired priest and a boy, the latter holding a

Francis J. Kelly

vessel containing holy water and a sprinkler. Outside the area of light surrounding the coffin they waited, cold, aloof, in black and white vestments, the advance guard of the dark, hungry earth. A deep hole in the moist, brown clay full of creeping, blind life. Jerry shuddered; if only they embalmed people now as they used to do long ago.

De profundis clamavi ad te Domine. . .

Muffled and hollow, the voices rose and fell in the last appeal of humanity, frightened by a glimpse of the eternity of its own saints and sinners. The words scarce uttered ere they were swallowed up, as if within the walls and ceiling lurked some monster insatiable, barely kept at bay by their constant repetition as an incantation dispelling the powers of darkness and invoking those of light.

Where Jerry knelt at the door but an odd phrase of the Latin reached him. He had lingered there because of a scarcely realized aversion from kneeling right in the centre of all those people's gaze. By himself – yes gladly would he have knelt at the coffin for ever, but not there and beside his father, too. . . .

Kneeling with bent back and lowered head, the bald circular patch gleaming in the sun, his father looked like a figure in a stained glass window, a tonsured saint. Saint, Jerry wondered, gazing at but scarcely seeing him. Vigorously sprinkling holy water, the priest landed many drops on the bald patch: dew glistening on a mushroom.

Et lux perpetua luceat . . .

As from a distance, weary and faint, the words reached Jerry scarce

heard in the dream-like state into which he had sunk. The narrow shaft of light streaming softly down . . .

Months ago, startled by a sound, tiny but sharp, piercing as the prod of a needle in a hand idly feeling soft cloth, he stood on the landing outside his mother's bedroom, holding his breath. Gone was the silence he had thought sole companion of her lying within so deathly quiet, hollow-cheeked. A sudden impulse had sent him in from the sunny street to have a peep when there was no one else there and, above all, when she might have her eyes closed. Open, he could scarce bear to look at them of late. They seemed to have grown so big with staring yet seeing nothing seemingly, as if they never closed – big, almost threatening, yet empty, sometimes moving no more than the eyes of a corpse move. For a while he stood on the landing, her door closed, but that opposite was half-open to a shaft of light streaming down from the skylight. Idly his eyes followed the motes dancing down that beam into the room. . . . The bald patch glistening in the light, the bent back, arms stretched over the sofa, his father utterly unaware of him, of everything. Bit by bit, as Jerry lived through the scene again, that moment's bewilderment gradually arose from the depths within him, a shapeless monster seizing him and shaking him out of his dreaming. Questions rained upon him, meaningless or else so charged with meaning as to be unbearable.

'What did it mean?' Jerry all but cried aloud in anguished perplexity, rising to his feet and moving into the church to where she lay. But at that moment, the prayers ended, everyone

The Widower's Son

stood up and moved out through the side door after the coffin – and he went with them, out into the blazing sunshine.

Arm up, shielding his eyes, Jerry stumbled down the steps, nearly falling.

Immediately he was surrounded by friendly hands and consoling voices. Sympathy, effusive yet none the less sincere, as Jerry knew full well and, partly for that very reason, resented the more, because it was so nearly, but not quite, what he longed for. Balm, soothing and pleasant enough in itself, became an irritant by just missing the dull throbbing pain, the exact seat of which even he could not precisely locate.

They spoke to him of mother and heaven. Well, yes, he believed all that, of course, but then heaven seemed so very far away. The sky was wrapped in its deep blue mantle of remoteness, made a little less unfriendly by a strip of tiny cirrus clouds. A dazzling silver strand; how soft and soothing under one's bare feet padding along at the edge of that vast, blue sea. Jerry's feet were aching in the tight shoes slithering along the gravelly path.

That mother would be up there in heaven waiting for him seemed natural enough, understandable, for so he had always been taught. She was not lost to him, though so terribly far away, but his father walking beside her coffin only a few yards ahead – Jerry felt he was further away, almost lost in a fog, the haze of memories that had just now risen up so stealthily, enveloping and benumbing, through which he must walk. Such was his immediate sorrow, torment rather, and these people spoke to him of something else.

Useless to think they would understand anything of this, for had his father not said, and they repeated with so much solemnity, 'the light has gone out of my life.' But then neighbours often hear things, and their queer manner towards him weeks before mother died – suppose they did suspect something?

Jerry halted, almost recoiling. It was as if the question, once evoked, spread itself across his path, a sort of fungus, clammy, untouchable, scarce bearable to look at, yet not to be ignored. There had been queer talk, now he remembered. Perhaps nothing very definite, rather a vague feeling of something in the air, the sudden silence when he drew near a group of the neighbours talking together with much head-shaking, and, above all, attempts to 'mother' him, as if he were already motherless. Once, though, he had overheard something about madness, but that might, *must*, have been a mistake. Jerry recalled the shrinking terror, his limbs seemingly turned to water, with which he had once, years ago, walked through a lunatic asylum clinging to his uncle's arm. Wild eyes staring wide out of hairy faces, and, above all, the sudden startling laughter – the shrill of a peacock and the scream of a horse in pain – these were mad people. And his mother? – *no, no*, it was unthinkable.

Ahead of him the narrow path wriggled its way through the dark green trees and the light green grass: a grey caterpillar bearing along the procession, a curiously coloured load. Hats, hard, black and soft, grey, clothes of all shades; limp and listless figures dragging along after the cart

Francis J. Kelly

on which the coffin gleamed. In front, pulling and pushing, were four gravediggers, clad in corduroy, deep ridged, like a sun-baked ploughed field. A distant, flat, green patch of the cemetery was ablaze with glass wreaths. Some of those near him were broken, glass and bits of the flowers lying around, a small statue of the Virgin lying beside an up-turned jam jar, from which withered flowers lay scattered. Years ago he used to play 'shop' with just such bits of delph and glass – only a kid then. Not so many years ago either, five maybe, and yet now he felt strangely old. Or is this being old? Jerry asked himself. If so, it was not a bit grand, as he and all the fellows used to think it would be – more like being sick. Ever since the day he had glimpsed into the room beside his mother's. A harmless, meaningless sort of business he had always thought it, though some of the fellows used to make a great fuss over it, as if kissing girls – queer, sloppy affair – meant something tremendous. No, there was nothing at all in it, he murmured, nothing at all. And yet? The more he thought over that incident, so trifling in itself, in connection with the talk among the fellows at school to the accompaniment of winks and gestures, the scraps of conversation between grown-ups overheard from time to time, the less sure he felt. Now he was like one strayed in tangled undergrowth, unable to go forward or retreat, unable even to see the ground on which he stands. Lost.

'Suppose I ask father?' Jerry murmured. 'No, I dare not. One of these people, the neighbours, then? No, no, they would be sure to laugh at me,

and, anyhow, what could I tell them, how explain? If I mention it in confession what would the curate say to me, and father one of the principal men in the church, collecting on Sundays, and all that? He'd surely lecture me on impure thoughts and give me no satisfaction either.'

No, it was his secret. A mere speck in the sky at first, it had spread out like a huge cloud, lowering and sinister, enveloping him. Must remain his secret, too. So she would have it, did she know, and perhaps, up there, she *did* know, understanding everything now so much better than people down here could. Maybe she was looking down on him this very minute. Huge soft masses of white woolly clouds were piled up in the north. Jerry wished he could sink right down through them until everything was blotted clean out, till he forgot everything, without knowing there was anything to forget. Meanwhile, and Jerry shrugged his shoulders, he must hug the secret to himself, like the Spartan boy with the fox. Queer, he had always thought that a silly yarn, but now, somehow, it didn't seem so. He stiffened himself up.

Yes, but the Spartan was hiding something he did himself, Jerry reflected bitterly, whereas this is just as if a fellow kicked over a stone long lying in soft ground – 'Oh, I can't make it out, I'll forget it,' he cried aloud, starting to run.

Jerry pulled up suddenly when he remembered where he was and dropped into a quick walk which soon brought him up with the rear of the procession. Glossy black, and dull yellow, bright eyes, quick head, every hop seeming as

The Widower's Son

if it might as easily land him on the top of a tree as over the nearest tuft of grass. Life, sheer joy of living in every twist and turn of the blackbird as Jerry watched.

Mother had been like that, full of life. To listen to her was grand even when scolding, for without looking up he always knew there was a funny light lurking in her eyes, ready to jump up when he said he was sorry. And now he could never tell her. Sorry he had ever vexed her, sorry he hadn't done more, everything, to please her. He looked round him. The trees breathless in the blue haze of heat, the dim outline of the distant hills – a purple-clad woman lying on her side – the sky now dropping a filmy lid, all should bear witness to his sorrow. If only he had studied hard at the Jesuits' College to which she had insisted on sending him, won a prize, if only for good attendance. But no, he had done nothing to please her, and now it was too late.

But then, how was he to know she was going to die when everyone said she was getting better, as she was – he was certain of it – until that queer change came over her so suddenly, so mysteriously? Not even the doctor could explain it, but what an awful difference it made in her, in everything.

Through the crowd Jerry just caught a glimpse of his father shuffling along close behind the coffin, head down, on bowed shoulders. So different from her. Long-jawed, drooping moustache over thick red lips, gloomy as that old yew tree over there. People were always praising him, always, yet – To be sure, Jerry admitted, he was free enough with money, no way stingy.

And he had loved mother too, of course – who wouldn't? – changing completely when she was near him, coming to life it seemed and hovering around her, long arms hanging by his sides awkwardly, as if restrained from seizing her, brown eyes queerly moist looking all over her. And mother loved him too.

How eagerly she listened for his footsteps on the stairs when she first lay down, and how her eyes would follow him, so hairy looking and gloomy, about the room. Feet dangling, Jerry sat on the edge of the bed watching: a fairy dancing around an old briar – no, Beauty and the Beast. That was it. He smiled to recall the sudden laugh he had given that day and how it had startled them all, including himself, as if something bright had suddenly flashed in among them. Even father, glowering quickly up from under suspicious, shaggy eyebrows, joined mother in the laughter, though neither knew nor asked what he was laughing at. Just a game of laughter. The last happy time they spent together.

Jerry shivered, suddenly feeling chill and lonely. With difficulty he kept himself from clutching at one of these people's arms beside him and pouring out all that was in his mind. But how begin? Oh, he could yell – but if he did they'd think him mad. No, all effort was useless, he could do nothing – best not to try even. His heart was empty, as if within him there was only a great space without light, where these thoughts must wander forlornly, unable to die, to vanish. Ah! if they would only go as they had come, unbidden.

For a while, unawares, he stared at a tombstone: stumpy pillars like

Francis J. Kelly

chair legs supporting a flat, highly polished slab, red-veined, shining like a mirror. The washstand in her room has a top of the same kind of stone.

Her room. The big wardrobe with a mirror door standing against the side wall; between the two windows, the centre of the room was taken up by the big bed, the two pillows and turned-down sheet always snow-white. Over the bed was a picture of the Blessed Virgin resting on a wooden bracket on which stood two vases, a miniature altar. How proud he had felt the first time he was allowed to help to dress the altar.

In a procession the flowers had passed, the chalice-like crocuses of yellow to the bedraggled hawthorn in front of that picture smiling on them all alike.

'There, maybe, lies help for me,' Jerry murmured, as he saw the picture through his tears, and already he felt relieved, like a sleeper awakening from a bad dream.

In his new-found happiness he pitied his father walking beside the coffin so desolate looking. He asked forgiveness of him, for the terrible thoughts he had had that should have been squelched like so many cockroaches. And surely he deserved pity for what he suffered at her hands the last few weeks of her life. Indeed, Jerry wondered now, looking back on it all, why his father humoured her in every whim however absurd. To be sure the doctor said there was nothing else to be done, evidently not understanding her at all, but then the expense. One day it would be some fancy wine never heard of before, which she scarcely tasted, or foods out-of-

season left aside all wasted. Then she insisted on different specialists being called in who had scarcely left ere she denounced them as quacks. As Jerry thought it over he felt sympathetic towards his father as against his mother, well as he loved her, and to feel that there was something in the neighbours' saying she was trying to ruin him before she died. But why should she? And, above all, why did father behave as if he dared not refuse her anything, however unreasonable? The one person who could get any good of mother during these last few weeks was her sister, without whom, everyone said, his father could not have managed at all.

And yet, mother had changed so strangely in those days as scarce to seem the same woman. Her eyes, like a brown pool on a mountain top, sometimes sombre under grey skies, sometimes flashing with the stars of night, but always lovely and full of light. Her eyes. Gradually fading out till at last they resembled stones set in a face of old, deeply lined ivory. In spite of himself, and, above all, his determination to ignore the neighbours' whispers, fear of her crept in on him like a tide cutting him off, helpless. Besides, he justified himself, she too changed towards him, all but repelling him.

Then a few days before her death she had beckoned him to her side. Shaken between surprise and joy, Jerry had stood, head down, silent, his heart fluttering like a bird with a broken wing. Strangely she looked, not at, but over and beyond him, utterly aloof it seemed, only for her white fingers, terribly thin, rumpling his hair. Silently he waited. Suddenly she turned her head away. When he looked up

The Widower's Son

puzzled, he saw his father was standing just inside the door. Jerry started forward. But his father came no nearer. For what seemed a breathless age till he felt like one submerged in deep, still water, they stood facing each other. Then his father withdrew and he followed, both moving ghost-like, silently.

Later, Jerry realized that his father avoided, as far as possible, being alone with her. Nor did he wonder, recalling how she had looked the very last time all three were in the room together. Whenever she looked in his father's direction her face changed completely from the moment before, the passive ivory mask snatched away. Instead, there was the wild and stealthy aspect of a lunatic about to shout out an angry insane secret; one of those misshapen heartrending secrets, that tear the entrails like wild beasts in the jungle twilight of madness. Recalling all this now, Jerry looked again at his father and pitied him. And yet . . . that scene glimpsed through the half-open door confronted him again, rising wraith-like through the mist of this pity.

The procession came to a standstill beside the grave: an iodine-painted wound in the grass. The coffin lowered, the mourners stood with bared heads, lips moving silently. As the grave-diggers grasped their shovels, Jerry looked away across the fields, staring at the horizon. The plomp of the sods on the coffin sounded through his reverie, the noise of a muffled drum steadily increasing until it lost all special character in a mere crumbling sound. Then the coffin cart was pushed back with a sharp piercing noise, strangely reminiscent, summoning the shadows to his reverie . . .

. . . standing on the landing outside his mother's bedroom, silent, barely breathing, hearing his heart beat in the stillness of the house. A sharp, creaking sound from the other room had pulled him up short. The house then was not empty as he had thought when a sudden impulse sent him in from the street. Just to peep in at her when those terribly changed eyes were covered. Cautiously, as though he might make a noise so doing, he turned his head towards the other room. Reclining on the sofa, his aunt is looking up at his father, whose back is to the door. Then, as Jerry stands there puzzled, his father stoops down suddenly and kisses her real hard, while she throws her arms around his neck. Flushing hot all over, he tiptoes into his mother's room. How white she looks, and quiet the room, the picture of the Virgin dominating everything. For an instant he stands just within the door as if he dared go no further here, after what he had witnessed in the other room. As he steals out he notices that the wardrobe door is half open, making the other room partly visible from the bed. Only vaguely does Jerry realize these things.

As it all came to him standing in the sun-smitten graveyard he watched the incidents fitting together like a jigsaw puzzle making a picture crude and cruel. Gasping, Jerry woke from his trance.

'Oh, mother, mother,' he sobbed, springing forward towards the grave, a fresh brown mound. A heavy-eyed grave-digger lifted his head, and looked at him open-mouthed. Jerry fell on his knees drooping, his face bent to the ground.

Mignon

by Allston A. Kisby

I

A FORTNIGHT before Christmas in the year 1542, a man lay dying in the grey stone keep of Falkland. The dying man was James the Fifth, King of Scotland and husband to Mary of Lorraine, daughter of Claude, Duc de Guise and widow of Louis d'Orleans, Duc de Longueville.

The weather was bleak and hostile. Three feet of snow had been followed by a sudden veering of the wind to the east. Weeks of black frost had made the roads impassable, nailing a stiff white shroud upon the frozen earth. The royal residence was practically isolated. The sting of that east wind could not be kept on the outside of the thick stone walls. Although braziers burned and crackled on each side of the great bed, many of the watchers wore fur and chafed icy fingers. The man on the bed shivered in the grip of a chill no mortal fire could dispel. A dour Scotch physician, with a face as grim as the weather, dressed in a long furred gown mixed potions at a side table stacked with bottles. A boarhound with red-rimmed eyes lay with its massive head on its paws staring into the heart of one of the braziers, sneezing in the yellow smoke that swirled knee-deep about the floor.

The room held a dozen men.

Nearly all of them were old, bearded, faces lined and scarred. They whispered in couples or fidgeted singly, or gazed furtively at the painful movements of the man on the bed. Few men are privileged to see a king die.

The king's eyes were dull, but when they rested on the whisperers, voices were hushed, confounded and appalled.

A servant, a little thin clean-shaven man, crept through the narrowly opened door. His blue chin quaked with ill-suppressed excitement. One old courtier—who had been occupying a place of honour at the head of the bed, glared at him in anger and went to meet him, his beard wagging. They met by the hound, which started up and licked the old man's shoe. The lackey whispered a few words into the old man's ear, left the room with his head high as if conscious of the gazes which followed him. The old courtier glanced at the dying man, bowed and quietly backed out after the menial. Speculation and whispering became intense. Even the doctor looked round from his phials and philtres.

A few minutes later the old man returned. His face was very red, lip-quivering. He was nearly eighty. He limped from an old sword wound in the

Mignon

left thigh. His eyes were blue. He limped across to the physician. The two held an inaudible conversation. The old man was asking something about the man on the bed, for he pointed twice in that direction. The doctor stepped over to the bedside, looked at his patient closely and professionally, thumbing his chin with a grey bony hand. He nodded.

The old man suddenly fell on his knees by the bed, kneeling awkwardly on the long black step. The left leg was stiff. His beard brushed the crumpled, gilded coverlet. He took the hand which lay there, a rough brown hand covered with a mat of thick dark hair. The hand was cold, damp with icy sweat under the thick hair. He kissed it. A tear dropped.

The head of the dying man rolled towards him as if the neck were powerless or broken. The dull eyes fixed themselves with an unwinking intensity on the face of the old man. The aged courtier mumbled over the hairy paw. The hound rose uneasily, came over and licked the old man's shoe, then his leg.

'Your Majesty -' he began. His voice cracked. 'Your Majesty -' but again it failed. The old man swallowed. 'Your Majesty, - Sire - it is my duty to inform you that a messenger has just arrived from Linlithgow with the welcome news that Her Gracious Majesty has given birth to a daughter. Both are well.'

The old man bent his lips - but the king with an unexpected access of strength tore his hand away. His eyes became distended and injected with blood. He clutched at the bedclothes, twisting them in the fingers. He

strained, reared himself up in the bed, his body swaying like a tree in a gale. Curious thick noises bubbled and oozed in his throat. He fought for speech. Cords in his neck stood out. At last the words came, thickly and only half audible.

'A daughter. A bitch, I knew it. I knew it. French mares never did breed anything but girls. A daughter. The devil go with it. The crown came to us through a woman, it will end with a woman. A bitch - the devil.'

He fell back slowly, like a man slowly drowning. His eyes were open, their expression incommunicable. His lips were fixed tight in a grin. The courtiers crowded round the bed - but the physician drove them back. He bent over the man on the bed muttering. The hound ran to the door, scratched and whined.

Mary became a queen at the age of one week.

II

On the evening of February 7th, 1587, a woman wrote at a small table in a compartment of Fotheringay Castle. She was dressed in subdued grey. A black lap dog lay twitching and shivering in a dream on the portion of her gown that draped the floor. The little dog was very old. Its snout had become quite grey. Its teeth, showing now and then in a whimpering snarl were yellow and worn down to little blunt stumps. One of its eyes was open, but the orb was light blue, opaque, fixed and unseeing. Its long black hair had lost its shine. Its paws

Allston A. Kisby

were grey, the claws splintered and ragged.

Mary was now in her forty-fifth year. This night of the seventh of February – black without and spitting with rain in the wind gusts – was to be her last. She was writing poetry.

The writing of poetry in the condemned cell was in strict accordance with the character of tragic heroine which destiny had marked out for her. Men's last utterances are frequently – are almost invariably poems, and it would probably be difficult to imagine an occasion in a man's life more truly poetic than the evening before his execution, when all hope has been pruned away and the end is as certain as the sunrise. The Elizabethans made a fashion of composing lyrics to prelude their violent ends. Usually these last-minute requiems were in the manner of Chidiack Tichbourne, who, some three months before this fateful night, and immediately previous to being quartered for the diversion of a Tyburn mob, had written in his cell in the Tower –

*I looked for Life, and saw it was a Shade ;
I trod the Earth, and knew it was my Tomb.*

Tichbourne was a young and hairless gallant – life, a glove tossed on a sword-point. And in spite of any momentary morbid regrets faced an awful death with unflinching eyes. He died before a howling mob with his soul in full sweet blossom, died for an ideal. He died without cooling from his martyr's ecstasy. Not so Babington, who, older, had squealed for mercy, and who would have sacrificed Mary herself to save his own pelt. Youth does not grovel; its eyes are enraptured by the

crown of martyrdom – even under the Tyburn quartering knife. When their heads were held up before the crowd Babington's eyes were closed, Tichbourne's were wide open. And the woman they died for was still locked in her cage.

But the death song of this woman was subtly different, its spirit not quite in alignment with the occasion of its composition. To begin with, she was forty-five. Her youth was far behind, obscured and distorted by clouds of later tragedies. She had been waiting for death a very long time. Life had shown her more horrors than usually come to the lot of a single being. Her soul was not drunken with the sight of any bright crown of martyrdom. She had been caught in the cold iron coils of a series of calamities from which there was not the faintest hope of escape. She was like a fly caught in the meshes of a vast machine and all her struggles and writhings made the end quite unalterable and entirely unavoidable.

So she sat down and wrote poetry.

*O Domine Deus – she sang.
O Domine Deus, speravi in te !
O care mi Jesu, nunc libera me!
In dura catena, in misere poena,
Languendo, gemendo, et genu flectendo,
Adoro, imploro, O libera me!*

It is a far cry from composing epithalamiums with Ronsard to writing a requiem with one's own soul. Mary had been taught poetics by Ronsard; her Latin came from that good Scot, scholar Buchanan.

For many moments Mary must have stared at the writing that had

Mignon

appeared under her pen, a little mystified by the way a solemn theme had bent itself into such a galloping song. Perhaps it reminded her of a little princess who sang in the fairy palace of Saint Germain many years before, a little golden-haired fairy princess who sang French songs and plucked roses, and laughed. Laughter.

O Domine Deus – and suddenly she had a vision of old John Knox with his patriarchal beard and hot projecting eyes, thundering against the Whore of Babylon and the Whore of Rome, and she recollected how she had emerged from an encounter with the fanatic, in tears. Tears. Laughter and Tears. But the old man had gone to his fathers. His thunder was silenced, and she was in an English prison waiting for the dawn. What was laughter? Laughter and roses!

The little dog twitched and shivered and suddenly cried aloud. Mary drove her pen into the wood, breaking the quill, and looked down. The dog was staring up at her, its old grey head twisted sideways because of its blind eye. Catching her eye, it wagged its tail and rubbed against her foot. She picked it up. The little body was naught but skin and bone, lighter than air. It curled down in her lap while she fingered its ears, staring straight in front of her at the poem. But she did not see the Latin. Her eyes had gone back and were discovering the dim caves of memory.

She had spent her youth in fairyland. She remembered the wonderful voyage to France in that sunny July when she was six. It was a fairy ship, in which she had sailed, a fairy ship, gliding smoothly over a rippled, green

sea ; sky, blue as a painting in a missal, puffed with white clouds. The mariners were taking a fairy princess to be betrothed to a fairy prince across the sea. They laughed and sang. Dolphins skipped in the green waves. Great white-winged birds hung in the blue. She marvelled at the great sails and with what skill the sailors hoisted them into position, clambering over the frail ropes and spars. Wonder followed hard on the heels of wonder. There came the landing in Brittany – France, her mother's country. Crowds of peasants in quaint bright costumes lined the sea wall and cheered as the ship drew smoothly to the shore. When she stepped ashore one woman in a bright red dress and gleaming black laced bodice had rushed up and kissed her hand. Crowds of citizens filled the queer cobbled streets and hung from the windows as the procession carrying the little Scotch queen wound its way to Saint Germain. That was a fairy palace, comparable only to palaces seen in dreams, of a magnificence beyond imagination. The great king she hardly ever saw, but every day she greeted Catherine de Medici, the mother of the pale silent young prince she was to marry. One day she was to be a great queen with twenty curtsying ladies outside the door of her chamber, not merely queen of a cold foggy land – but queen of the great country of France which was richer than England and almost as rich as Spain. Her husband, the pale youth, was to be king. Already the French gallants bowed and paid her extravagant compliments.

The ten years she spent in France were dream-like in their happiness.

Allston A. Kisby

Her marriage with the pale silent boy who had grown into a weak and sickly young man, eight years her senior, was the one jarring note. Two years of nominal marriage to an ailing and defective prince, two years and he was dead, his pale face hardly disfigured by death. She was a widow at sixteen. And one foggy August morning she found herself on a French ship sailing for Scotland, leaving her land of dreams in the hands of the merchant's daughter. The sea was black and oily, only just distinguishable. The mast heads were hidden by the fog. The sailors were gloomy and silent, apprehensive of an English attack. Even Chastelard the irrepressible was silent. Mary was in tears, and the two little black lap dogs in her cabin failed to cheer her.

The happy dream ended. The nightmare began. The rest of life unfolded itself as a tragedy of such unspeakable horror that Webster at his darkest could not have conceived the like.

Her land torn apart by religion; one sect looking upon her as their tool, the other as a wicked foreign whore. Even Knox who, if fanatical and dour, was never deliberately untruthful, wrote: 'We call her not an whore, but she was brought up in the company of the wildest whoremongers.' Fate pointed from one climax to another even more terrifying – and there was no pause or respite. Her marriage with the malignant and jealous Darnley – the murder of Riccio on the very threshold of her chamber – Darnley's assassination – Bothwell's rape of her – and now a condemned woman writing poetry and the whole of Protestant

England gloating over her harlot's progress.

O Domine Deus, speravi in te!

III

Nineteen years of imprisonment in England had rounded the fine shoulders and bowed the tall figure of the Queen of Scots. Illness and inadequate medical attention had stiffened her limbs and wrecked her physique. The hair had lost its fine blonde and auburn tints. It was grey and thin, hidden beneath false locks. The long, pale, finely cut face had withered and shrunk, the brow lined and scored. But the eyes had never changed. They remained as bright, as golden, as unshrinking and as enigmatic as ever.

Suddenly the dog moved and she felt a hot pink tongue slide over her fingers. The queen looked puzzled a moment, then laughed quietly. It was a sound her lips were unused to, and Jane Kennedy, tearfully pretending to read her book of Hours, looked up surprisedly. The queen laughed, remembering how another little black dog – a female ancestor of Mignon, had bitten the noble arm of the learned Abbe de Brantôme when he had insisted on carrying it ashore at Leith. The shouting of the foreign Scotch voices, the strange figures half hidden in the fog had frightened her. White teeth met in the Abbe's forearm. 'An ill omen?' d'Amville hazarded. 'An ill omen, Sieur Abbe?' 'Not so my friend,' was the quick rejoinder. 'Is she not a bitch, and to be touched by the lips of a lady – and of a lady of such

Mignon

exalted lineage were surely no ill omen.' Brantôme had a tongue swift to turn as a snake. That had happened twenty-six years before. An ill omen!

She had brought two of them from France and she had never been without this breed of little black lap dogs. All through her life they had passed. At every turning point a little black lap dog lay. One was left – old Mignon, who had outlived her children, for what purpose but to mark the end of the last league.

On that terrible night of March the ninth, when Riccio had sung his last song –

*Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir la
chandelle,
Assise auprès du feu, devidant et filant –*

singing in his queer Italian accent at Mary's own request, a little black lap dog lay at her feet. When Darnley and Ruthven with his warlocks had crowded into the chamber and laid hands on Riccio, it was the little lap dog that had given the warning – a sharp growling yelp, hearing the clink of Ruthven's armour which he wore over his nightshirt. And when Fauldonside held Mary back with his pistol it was the same little dog which had bitten his leg and had had its life kicked out of its tiny body by his great boot. Riccio was dragged out, screaming, and hacked to pieces on the threshold. He never completed Ronsard's song, though often Mary heard his singing in dreams, heard it break off in terror as it had done when Ruthven stalked in pale as a corpse. When Darnley next day pretended sorrow for the murder she had said, her gold eyes

glittering terribly, 'You have done me such wrong, that neither the recollection of our early friendship, nor all the hope you can give me of the future can ever make me forget it.' Strangely enough it was not so much poor Riccio's terror-frozen eyes, she remembered, as the twisted lifeless body of a little black lap dog crushed beneath Fauldonside's heel and his pistol point pressing against her bosom. Two months later her son had been born.

Again there had been a little black lap dog in Kirk o' Field on the evening of Sunday, February 9th. Mary had left one of the dogs and a ring with the sick Darnley when she left with her torchbearers for Bastian's wedding. Darnley had shut himself away in Kirk o' Field, wearing a taffeta mask, until the small-pox scars should have healed. Long before day-break Kirk o' Field was in ruins. The explosion had shaken the entire neighbourhood. But the body of Darnley was not found among the smoking wreckage, nor was it disfigured by any trace of the explosion. He was found dead and cold at the foot of the gardens under a rowan, a little distance from the house. There was no wound upon his body. A cloth had been crammed in the mouth. By him lay two other corpses, the body of his valet and the body of a little black lap dog with its head crushed.

By this time Mary's lap dogs had become notorious, and when she was led to Edinburgh after Carberry, behind a great picture of the murdered Darnley, there were many in the crowd who shouted for her death by burning. She was a witch and her familiars

Allston A. Kisby

dwelt in the little black dogs. A mob howled for her death round the Provost's house where she was imprisoned, and when she appeared at the window, haggard, her hair flying, her breasts bared, the crowd was moved to greater frenzy. 'Burn the whore! Burn the witch!' But there were others who walked away in silence, dumb and wondering.

But old Mignon was the last. She was old, blind in one eye, practically toothless, grey with age. What would happen to her after the next dawning? *O Domine Deus*. It was to be death at last. The beast that troubled the world – as Morgan called Elizabeth, had moved at last. Babington and the rest of the plotters had danced at Tyburn some three months before. Still she had delayed signing the warrant. But now it had been done. That grim puritan Lord Kent and Shrewsbury had been nominated to see that the warrant was enforced. Secretary Beale left London on Saturday morning with the order and letters for Kent and Shrewsbury. He had hardly bowed himself out of her presence before Elizabeth was saying that 'she wished it could be done in some other way that would not throw blame on her.' But Amyas Paulet had refused to see the queen's hint to have his prisoner quietly silenced, and Elizabeth's niggardliness had frustrated her offer to the Scots.

Beale arrived at Fotheringay on Sunday morning. He kept his mission secret, and Mary suspected there were to be more interminable questions. Kent came on Monday night, and Shrewsbury, looking ill and pale, on Tuesday morning. The Sheriff of

Northamptonshire had been commanded to be in attendance at day-break on Wednesday.

Kent, Beale and Shrewsbury were admitted to the presence of Mary on Tuesday afternoon. Even then she was still ignorant of their purpose. Barbara Mowbray, who had married her secretary, Curle, and whose child she herself had baptized, was in attendance. She was dressed, as usual, in the grey that became her so well. Mignon slept fretfully in her lap, stirring and whining softly in her sleep. Mary rose to meet them, putting the lap dog in a chair. Mary was six feet tall, and in spite of much severe illness and far more serious emotional and mental strain, carried herself as regally as ever. They bowed and Shrewsbury tried to stutter a greeting. Her quick bright eyes went over their faces. Beale would not face her glance. He fidgeted his papers. His feet shuffled nervously. Already he hated his task. Kent's face was wooden, stern and unbending, his eyes glassy. He saw a very wicked woman, who was about to receive a well-merited punishment. Protestant England would never be safe as long as this Catholic plotter lived. He would never shirk his duty, unpleasant though it was. Shrewsbury was stern too, but his eyes wavered. His face was pale. To him she was a woman who probably deserved death. The Babington plot had almost convinced him. But she was a woman, a woman who had fondled her little lap dogs, a woman who had played with and sung to his little grand-daughter when he had been her gaoler at Sheffield. Altogether she had been under his eyes for

Mignon

fourteen years, and in that time he had seen many little things which now made his eyes shrink and caused awkward misgivings. Perhaps she was an evil woman – she must be, the Queen of England could not be mistaken – but she was a woman, a woman, and he could not blind himself to that. Shrewsbury had always been chivalrous.

The silence was only one of seconds. But in that silence Mary's hopes collapsed beneath her, – the hopes which, in spite of her better judgment, had strengthened in the weeks that had elapsed since Babington had died. She heard and saw nothing. She did not hear Barbara Mowbray scream. She did not hear Kent's voice, cold and stern, exultant, delivering his awful message. She did not see Beale's shaking hands fumble with his tapes and papers and hold one before her eyes, – a paper with a heavy dangling seal. All was blackness, and roaring waters, as if the solid earth had dissolved beneath her feet. She did not see them leave. When next she recovered, she was in Barbara Mowbray's arms, dishevelled, shrieking that she would kill herself rather than suffer like a common trollop under the axe of an English headsman.

Beale and Kent and Shrewsbury shunned each other for the rest of the day. Each had a vision engraved indelibly on his memory – a woman writhing on the floor of her chamber screaming for mercy, a little black dog trying to lick a suddenly haggard face.

An hour later Mary was a queen again, writing poetry. *O Domine Deus, speravi in te!*

That night the queen 'supped very

sparingly,' as was her custom. When the brief but painful meal had come to an end she had all her servants called to her, and drank to their health and good fortune. When they, kneeling, pledged her 'their tears mingled with the wine.' She distributed the few personal things she possessed among them and then retired to her chamber with Jane Kennedy and Mignon. There she made her will and wrote letters, protesting her innocence of any murderous designs against the Queen of England, to her Confessor, to the King of France and to her cousin the Duc de Guise. She played a little with Mignon. Jane Kennedy read to her from her book of Hours. From then until four o'clock in the morning she prayed and read alternately. Exhausted, she threw herself on her bed and slept for two hours. But Mignon kept awake, her one good eye glowing like a coal. Mary slept, though of her dreams we know nothing. But once Jane Kennedy saw her smile and heard her murmur something in French.

During the night the carpenters had been at work in the great hall. They were building the scaffold, a little stage of oaken planks some three feet high, upon which the last act of the tragedy was to be performed. Occasionally the sound of their mallets reached the seclusion of Mary's chamber, making Jane Kennedy start and causing Mignon to lift her grey old head to listen uneasily. Mary did not appear to notice the sounds.

She was awakened at six o'clock, before it was light, and was dressed with more than ordinary care by her maids, Curle and Kennedy. Outside

Allston A. Kisby

the wind had died and rain descended in a steady downpour. A calmness and a fortitude had taken possession of her. There was no hope. The end was as sure and certain as the dawn. It was inescapable. The turbulence and violence of life would end in two hours. An ugly death, – but she would die as she had lived, a good Papist and a Queen. She was as cold as ice, unexcited by any hope of reprieve or escape, untroubled by fear. So she dressed calmly, selecting each garment with meticulous care as a great actress might costume herself for her last appearance. She allowed Barbara Mowbray to brush and braid her long hair, grey now, and without its tints of auburn and gold. She felt like an actress among her tiring-women. All her life had been like a stage play. She had always been the tragic heroine. She had seen a favourite hacked to pieces at her bedroom door, had given birth to a weakling half-imbecile son, her husband had been assassinated, she had been raped by his murderer, had suffered the agony of a still-born child, had spent nineteen years in prison in a country she hated among a people who regarded her as a dangerous, Roman harlot whose delight lay in murder, blasphemy and whoredom. And now the final act – death by beheading at the order of her cousin. It was so perfect – full circle. After that – in two hours would come unutterable peace in the sweet calm of eternity.

O Domine Deus.

Her servants had been called to her chamber. She read her will and then distributed all the clothes she had left. Many of them had never seen her so calm and possessed as on that morning.

They knelt and she gave them her blessing. Each kissed her hand in turn. When she bade them farewell, it was they who broke down.

She dismissed her attendants and retired alone to her little oratory. On her knees before the altar she prayed – was it a plea for forgiveness, or a pæan of rejoicing that peace was coming at last? That is something we may not know. Nor shall we know what strange faces she saw in the flames of the burning candles, or what voices spoke to her from the shadows behind the altar.

As she knelt there was a sound at her feet. Something touched and rustled her gown. It was old Mignon who had followed her mistress disconsolately into the oratory. It was the little dog which broke down her fortitude. She could not keep back the tears now. Mignon was faithful, the last of a faithful breed. The rest of them lay dead in a score of places, one at Holyrood, another at Kirk o' Field, one at Carberry, still another in the gardens at Sheffield. Old Mignon was left. She was very old, worn-out, a tiny bag of bones, life scarcely a spark. How she lived her mistress never knew. She had eaten practically nothing for the last month, refusing to be tempted with the most delicate flesh. Mignon loved her mistress, and hers was not the love of a flatterer or the love of a courtier. In her old veins ran the blood of a noble French breed. Mignon was the last. At every point in her life Mary saw a little black lap-dog. Mignon's tiny body, lighter than air, fragile as a feather, was to mark the end. A spirit paw would stretch out and touch her in oblivion. Mignon was faithful.

Mignon

At eight o'clock when the Sheriff entered and told her that the hour had come, Mignon had disappeared. She rose, and carrying her ivory crucifix preceded him, and was joined in the ante-room by Kent and Shrewsbury and Beale, Paulet and Drury.

A few steps farther Mary found her path blocked by Sir Robert Melville, her house steward, who had been denied access to her since the unmasking of the Babington plot. The old man was utterly broken and in tears. He knelt before her. Sobs prevented his speech. She put a hand on his shoulder and Shrewsbury heard her say in perfectly calm tones, 'My good Melville, do not lament, rather rejoice that thou shalt see a final period put to Mary Stuart's troubles. The world is naught but vanity and subject to more sorrow than an ocean of tears can wash away.' And as she passed on, 'Farewell my dear friend. Pray for thy mistress and queen.'

It was then that she noticed that her chaplain de Preau was not among the party, nor were any of her ladies. She asked why they were not present. She wished them to be with her at the scaffold, she said. Kent replied that he could not grant her request, he was 'afraid they might put some superstitious trumpery into practice, perhaps there would be a dipping of handkerchiefs in her grace's blood, and other Papist performances which would be offensive to God and to all decent Christians.' Mary said she would vouch for their behaviour and obedience. Still Kent demurred. 'Surely,' she said, 'you might grant a greater favour than this, though I were a woman of less rank than the

Queen of Scots.' Kent remained silent, unwilling to budge an inch for this Catholic plotter, and the others dare not give way on their own initiative. Mary's eyes flashed, and she spoke with some heat. 'Am I not cousin to your Queen,' she said, 'descended from the royal blood of Henry VII, a married Queen of France and anointed Queen of Scotland, yet you deny my last request.'

At length, after much consultation, and with very ill-grace, they allowed Melville and her physician, Barbara Mowbray and Jane Kennedy to accompany her to the scaffold.

Outside the walls more than a thousand people had gathered, for the news of the impending execution had spread far and wide. They stood in silence in the heavy rain, waiting for the bell and waiting to hear the Sheriff announce that justice had been done and Protestant England was safe once more. Inside the hall a great log fire hissed and crackled in the wide-open chimney. Three hundred knights and gentlemen of the district had been admitted.

The little black stage, some ten or twelve feet square, was now ready for the final act. It had been railed off and the Sheriff's halberdiers in helmets and steel corselets were on guard to keep back the crowd. Upon the stage stood the block, a cushion and a stool, all draped in black. The axe stood by a rail. At the back of the scaffold the Tower headsmen and his assistant waited, black, masked and silent. There was a buzz of conversation in the hall. But when Mary entered on the arm of one of the Sheriff's officers there was a sudden and profound silence,

Allston A. Kisby

broken only by the spitting of the burning logs, and once by a terrible crash as a man fainted at the back of the chamber.

Mary was in her forty-fifth year. Nineteen years of imprisonment had aged her considerably. But the woman who entered the great hall of Fotheringay, walking erect and firmly was no old woman. It was the Queen of Scots of twenty years before. The stoop, which had bowed her shoulders for a dozen years had gone. Her carriage was firm and regal. The skin of her face was white and unlined, smooth as marble. Her eyes were golden, flashing with light. Her fair hair glinted and shone with the auburn tints which had driven Brantôme into raptures when she was sixteen. It was a transformation which left the crowd gasping and amazed.

She had dressed very carefully, discarding her customary grey for a long robe and jacket of black satin, trimmed and slashed with velvet. From her golden hair and falling over her back to the ground hung a veil of finest lawn. She carried her ivory crucifix. Jewelled paternosters hung at her girdle.

It was like the entrance of a great actress. The audience was stunned. She stood for a moment and looked over the company, even smiled, before seating herself on the stool. She was absolutely composed.

Shrewsbury and Kent, stern and white, took their places. Mr. Secretary Beale stepped upon the scaffold and read the warrant aloud, though the sound of his voice could be heard only by those nearest the rails, and when his quavering mumble ceased only a few

joined in with the customary, 'God save Queen Elizabeth.'

During the reading of the warrant Mary sat perfectly motionless staring straight in front of her, without a tremor or movement of any kind. Not a muscle stirred in that still, white face. Indeed she appeared so little affected that Shrewsbury at the conclusion of Beale's performance approached her nervously with, 'Madam, you hear what we are commanded to do?'

'Certainly,' was the calm reply, 'certainly I hear, my lord, and you will do your duty.'

She rose from the stool and was on the point of sinking to her knees when Doctor Fletcher, the Dean of Peterborough Cathedral, whose Protestant conscience refused to let him see this woman die in the obnoxious Roman faith without attempting to conquer her perversion, stepped forward. He urged her to 'repent her sins, settle her faith in Christ, by Him to be saved,' and not die 'in a state of most damnable heresy.'

'Trouble not thyself, Master Dean. I am settled in my faith, for which I mean to shed my blood.'

But Fletcher had been instructed by Kent to foil any Papist demonstration on Mary's part with the thunders of the true faith. He commenced a prayer in English in which some of the congregation joined. Mary turned her back on him, knelt and prayed loudly in Latin, interspersed with phrases of English. The audience ceased their half-hearted intonation and stared open mouthed at the duel between the Queen of Scots and Master Fletcher. As Fletcher stammered and hesitated, Mary's voice strengthened. It could

Mignon

be heard all over the hall. Disgusted at the exhibition, Shrewsbury finally ordered the Dean to stop, and Mary prayed alone, changing her Latin for English so that the company might understand. Kent's face whitened and writhed. But it would have been unseemly to stop her.

'As thy arms, O Jesu, were stretched upon the cross, so receive me O God into the arms of thy mercy.'

She raised the ivory crucifix to her lips. As she kissed it Kent's pious soul revolted. He could contain his indignation no longer.

'Madam,' he remonstrated, 'you had better put such Popish trumpery out of your hand and carry Christ in your heart.'

But the heretic retaliated perfectly calmly and with a good deal of fire, 'I can hardly bear this emblem in my hand without, at the same time, bearing Him in my heart.' Kent was silenced. He flushed and bit his lip. Instead of proving the victim the woman was the master of the proceedings.

When she rose the two executioners stepped forward, and kneeling, begged her forgiveness.

Still she remained calm. Kent wondered when her spirit would break.

'I do forgive you,' she said, 'for now I hope you shall end all my troubles.'

Her ladies came upon the platform. In dead silence they began to assist her in the last preparations. Her black robe was removed, the lawn veil taken away, the black jacket. Beneath, Mary wore a long crimson velvet underdress. A pair of crimson velvet sleeves were put on her arms. Barbara Mowbray bound up her golden eyes

with a handkerchief of cambric 'all wrought over with gold needlework.'

The effect of this transformation—the tall woman in crimson between the black figures of the headsmen, was appalling. The audience gasped, stunned and spell-bound. Her own women, who up to now had observed silence, burst into moaning and sobbing. Mary appeared to be the only calm person in the hall. 'Ne criez vous, J'ay promis pour vous,' she said. She kissed them.

The headsman led her to the block. She knelt on the square black cushion. She placed her hands beneath her neck. The assistant removed them gently. He held them. The headsman struck. A man in the hall shrieked and shrieked. The blow merely severed the skin. Blood ran over the white shoulders. Mary did not wince, or move. He struck again. Another blow was necessary before the head was completely severed. The headsman held up the trophy. It was a strange face which stared down upon the crowd. It was the face of an old woman, wrinkled and haggard; the hair grey and faded. The golden plaits, the auburn-tinted coif lay on the scaffold. They were false.

'So perish all enemies of the queen,' stammered Master Fletcher. One voice responded with the 'Amen.' It was the voice of Kent. The rest were silent. *O Domine Deus, speravi in te! O Domine Deus!*

Upon the scaffold the body was stripped like that of a common malefactor. All the clothing was to be destroyed, so that there should be no Popish trumpery of keeping tokens.

Allston A. Kisby

When the corpse was touched there was a movement beneath, and a tiny whimpering cry. A little black lap dog crawled out when the crimson dress was moved. It crept and lay between the head and shoulders, whimpering. Its long black hair, patched with grey, was sticky with blood. Mignon was faithful.

When Elizabeth was notified that the Queen of Scots was dead, she sent for Sir Christopher Hatton, 'and with an appearance of wonderful grief, told him that she had never commanded, or intended *that thing*.' And a week later her conscience permitted her to write to Mary's son, 'I would you knew the extreme dolour that overwhelms my mind for that miserable accident—which, far contrary to my meaning hath befallen.'

IV

There is one further echo, faint as an echo must be when it comes from the grave, but none the less quite unmistakable.

James had been nine years king of England, reigning fearfully at Westminster in his thick daggerproof

doublets and enormous quilted breeches. He had nothing of his mother's character, ugly where she was beautiful, weak where she was strong, mean where she was generous. He was more than half-imbecile. He was spindle-shanked. His spine was crooked. His tongue was too large for his mouth. His eyes goggled. He went in fear of assassination all his life, which made him secretive, vicious and distrustful even of his friends. His brain ran in quaint and outlandish twists. He wrote some extraordinary rubbish about witches and tobacco. He was obsessed with his own divinity. Altogether he was regarded by the rest of Europe as a rather curious animal these eccentric English kept on their throne.

In 1612 the grave at Peterborough was opened. The remains were to be taken to Henry VII.'s chapel at Westminster where a costly tomb had been prepared. When the labourers had broken into the grave they discovered a small handful of dry bones at the foot of the casket. The bones were crumbling, dry and unrecognizable—a handful of dust. They were brushed to one side when the coffin was raised, and ground to powder beneath the feet of the workmen.

The Market

by H. Ide

WE are beginning, at last, to speak of 'the hard times' with that note of faint pride in miseries shared in common that I remember in talk about air raids during the war, and which was heard in Irish voices when they spoke of 'the troubles.' Certainly I am grateful to these 'hard times' for considerable heart-warming entertainment and much pleasant food. For the times, aided by affectionate memories of housekeeping in America, France and Italy, have driven me to buying food from the open stalls and barrows of a street market in a foreign quarter near my home. Is there any other city so like a chequer-board as London? London, with its dark square of slum behind each white square of fashionable, comfortable or business quarter, as if the great city vainly tried to remind us that we are members one of another, and that the poor are with us still. (It comforts me, however, to think that the poor of this neighbourhood, Latin peoples who appreciate good food, can get it very cheaply here for the mere trouble of choosing it themselves, which they enjoy, and by carrying it away. And it comes fresh from Covent Garden and other great exchanges of produce every morning, pushed on barrows by the patient vendors.)

My market sprawls all along one side of a narrow street and round a corner into another. It has been allowed to establish itself, taking advantage of English *laissez faire*, in a particularly unsuitable spot; a car or lorry can just wedge itself in and crawl along between the backs of the stalls and the opposite curb. I am always expecting to see a slice taken off the comfortable behind of the enormous man who sells fish, which he erroneously describes, at the top of a voice as enormous as his figure, as 'All alive-O!'

Though the purchasers are mostly foreigners, there are only a few stalls which are not served by the purest Cockneys. I wonder if their English conservatism allows them to eat the unusual things they sell? Here, to my great delight, are piles of American sweet corn, their rows of pearly kernels hidden in a delicate green husk and a tangle of 'silk', waiting to be eaten, in the proper but indecorous way, as one plays a mouth-organ. There is the rich purple aubergine of France, the red peppers of Italy, which are so appetizing stuffed with English prawns, even the young octopuses, beloved of Italians and others with a taste for eating pleasantly-flavoured rubber tyres. I have not yet dared to offer

H. Ide

them to an English party. In this market the vegetable marrow is never found as the proud English gardener loves to grow it, a monster which will, such is his secret and wicked ambition, lie at the foot of the steps and trip up the visiting clergyman as he rounds the difficult turn by the font in the Harvest Festival Procession. Here it is slain, as it should be, in its six-inch infancy, ready to be cooked with Parmesan cheese in the Italian manner. Here the lovely grapes of South Africa can be found, on a lucky day, for eight-pence a pound; the Avocada pears from the Argentine wait to grace a salad beside the delicious cherimoya from Chili, whose flavour is that of strawberries mingled with pineapple. And all for a few pence each. They are a pretty sight, these fruit and flower stalls, with their pyramids of colour glowing in the sunlight and seeming to store a little of it, even on a rainy day or when the acetylene flares burn and blow and cast strange shadows after darkness falls. I often think, uncomfortably, that my economies and pleasures are gained at the expense of a hard life for the sellers. What is the incidence of rheumatism, I wonder, for these people whose meagre canvas roofs offer a very inadequate shelter from sun and rain and none at all from frost and wind? Yet they seem a cheery lot, on the whole, calling out jests to each other even at the end of a long, inclement day. Perhaps most of them are hardened to it from childhood; even from babyhood. At least the Italian woman who sells National Mark eggs remained at work till the day before her baby was born, and reappeared a week later with her baby

beside her in its pram, well covered, it is true, but still exposed for long hours to the rigours of a frosty, foggy January. Yet he seems to be thriving on it. The drought that has been such a curse to the villages has been a comfort to the street market, yet last winter was exceptionally cold, and this summer unusually hot, so I suppose they are losing on the swings what they gained on the roundabouts.

There is only one permanently cross face in my market, and that is a pity, for it began as a pretty one. But sharp dealing has sharpened every feature of this woman, and made her manner permanently defensive and irritable. She is the only coster who persistently sells bad fruit from the back of her stall, even to old customers. I am no customer of hers, twice was enough for me, as I told her, and left her volubly furious, but I see her serving others in the same way. They all do it, but with most of the others it is not bad fruit, only less good. And if one goes regularly, as I do, and is friendly, as it is very easy to be, one is soon given the best fruit from the top of the pyramid or even allowed, this is a great market compliment, to pick out the peaches with which one's eye has fallen in love. In this, as in so many other English matters, I am reminded of Kipling's delicate study in nationality, *An Habitation Enforced*, and of how his Americans, settled in the Sussex countryside, find that they can do no better than follow the old family motto of their English ancestors, 'Wayte Awhile.' Give them time to get used to you, even to like you, and these Cockneys will sell you their fruit at almost any price that you are able

The Market

to pay, the flower-sellers will divide their bunches, at the cost of some trouble and dampness, so that you can buy the tuppence worth that is all you need to complete some pet plan of flower arrangement for your table. That most touching trait of the Irish and English poor, an indifference to money, has made me, not of set plan, indeed against my will and temperament, into an all but Latin bargainer. Bargaining is not really supposed to be the rule of the market; all the piles are marked. (The trick of writing the 'half' in the notice '6d. a half pound' very small, so that from a distance it looks like '6d. a pound' can hardly be called deception, it is so well understood.) I don't wish or mean to bargain, but I do. I stop at a stall to buy six lemons, and the owner, a cheery, unshaven, little rough-coated terrier of a man says "ave a nice pine?"

'No,' I answer quite truthfully, 'I don't want a pineapple enough to pay two shillings for it.'

'Oh, then, taiké it for one and six.'

'But I don't want it for one and six.'

'Well, what *do* you want to pay?'

'Oh, not more than a shilling. I really don't want to buy a pineapple at all.'

"Ere, taiké two for 'arf-a-crahn,' cries my friendly tormentor, and, before I can wink, has pitched them into my basket.

'No, no,' I protest, laughing and indignant, 'I'm not catering for a restaurant.'

'Oh, very well, 'ere's a nice one for a bob, - and I didn't mean to be rude.'

'I know,' I say reassuringly, and

add penitently, 'and I didn't mean to beat you down, I just didn't want a pineapple if I had to pay more than a shilling for it.'

'That's h'all right,' with a sudden beam, 'You're a friend o' mine, and, h'anyrate, I wants to get rid of 'em.'

To-day I am regretting my success in bargaining and my general weakness for the market people. A fine, tall, upstanding man with a beautiful gypsy face, whom I had never seen before, stood a little way outside the market, with fresh-killed plover, tied in some mysterious and skilful manner, hanging from a cut stick, like an ancient tally. His looks, his persuasiveness, the conviction that they must have been poached (a thing that always appeals to my lawless American heart), made me linger till I had reduced their price from 1s. 6d. to 10d. each, but it also made me believe him about how easy they would be to pluck. A handful of breast feathers came off like magic in his skilful fingers. But *I* have been wrestling for a whole afternoon with wing feathers and the down on the neck, which seems to have been buckled on with 'hoops of steel.'

There is a time when no stall vendor is amiable, and that is when you try to make a small purchase early in the morning. I think there must be a superstition that, if your first sale is a mean one, all the others that day will be the same. I once tried to buy $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pound of mushrooms for seasoning early one Friday morning. No one would sell them to me. It was maddening to see them there, fresh and oyster-pink, and not to be able to get them. One man declared that he had no weight

H. Ide

smaller than $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. When I picked up his 4 oz. weight he was very indignant. So I lost *my* temper, too, and hastily invented a superstition of my own. 'Don't you know,' I cried, 'that if you refuse the first customer who asks you on a *Friday* morning, you will have no luck all day?' Only half convinced, but afraid to defy these new gods, the $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. was ungraciously put into a bag and I carried it off in triumph.

My little terrier of a man told me what I think must be the great romance of my market. Things were quiet and we both had a few minutes to spare. I told him how good a melon he had sold me had been. 'Well, I likes to please a good customer,' he replied, 'but do you know, there was a lidy comes 'ere in a great Chrysler car and leaves it just in the street there. *You* know what a Chrysler car costs!' I made noises to show that I was suitably impressed. 'Well, hup she comes and she says "'ow much are them lemons?" "Two a penny," I says. "'Ow quaint!" says she. "Put two in a bag and deliver them to my car." "Beggin' your pardon, lidy," says I, "but slavery went out in England in 1850 and you can taik *'em* yourself." "You are very impertinent, my man," says she, "an' I shall report you to an hoffer." Sure enough, back she comes with a copper. "This lidy says you was rude to 'er," says 'e, "what 'ave you got ter sai?" "Well," says h'I, "h'I didn't mean ter be rude, but she harks me to deliver two lemons for a penny to 'er car and I says she can take 'em 'erself." The copper 'e just jerked 'is thumb over 'is shoulder and says, "'ere, you taik your car out

o' this street or I'll 'ave you hup for hobstruction.'" Thus I felt, as I listened, were folktales created; here was the triumph of poverty over riches, of industry over idleness. How much more entertaining these independent people are, of both sexes and all ages, owning their poor means of livelihood, able to say what they think and to lose money if they wish rather than submit to discourtesy, than are the rows of polite young ladies, all with plucked eyebrows and crimson finger-nails, who 'serve' us in the provision department of Messrs. Harridge's Giant Stores.

Last autumn it was proved to me that I had been judged and had found my level in the market. Toward the end of September I was buying one of the deliciously sweet, dark-green honeydew melons from my rough-coated terrier. As he dropped it into my basket he remarked regretfully, 'The *real* toffs, once hoysters is hin, they won't *look* at a melon!' I couldn't resist repeating this remark to my luncheon guests, though it reflected little honour on me or my meal.

But, though he regrets my lack of genuine toffhood, I feel that my Cockney terrier is not without a certain admiration and affection for me, for "ere you are, my little cock-sparrer!" he cried, the other day, as he tipped costard apples into my basket. This description of my middle-aged, none too slender and very obviously female self convulsed the young friend who was with me, but I have added it to my valued store of pleasant if incongruous compliments. It was, however, a better description of the speaker. Poor, plucky little London cock-sparrer, may he never lack for crumbs!

Morning in Seville

by H. M. Tomlinson

OUR Spanish bus may have been right, necessity being what it is with speed to match it, in hurrying from cathedral to cathedral. It was doing its best within the limit allowed. It gave us cause one day to see that if our journey had been straight from Victoria Station to Seville, allowing us ten minutes to stand beside the first shaft within the cathedral's principal door, that would have been reward enough.

Seville's haughty fabric is restorative. It is a testimony above challenge to the quality of the commonalty. It is sovereign but impersonal. It suggests no fine names. The tomb of Columbus is there, but it is as incidental as a cardinal's hat which hangs from the shadows like a big red spider on a thread. The hat is anonymous. Kings are hidden there, but they have less to do with it now than the old man in mediæval dress conducting a file of choristers across the vast floor like a black-beetle with a line of tiny white moths fluttering after him.

A priest in heavy vestments is before the altar of a chapel, and kneeling behind him are a few women and one man. A group of tourists is whispering and staring about. A beggar importunes. Music is drifting somewhere from the heart of it. The varied life out of which the cathedral rose con-

tinues to circulate in it; the ascent of the masonry is still tense with the vigour which sent it aloft.

You cannot see to what hidden expansions the aisles lead, nor to what height the shafting lifts, but there is a sense of the universal in unity. You know men can do well. They did this. The joy of their various crafts is in the soaring lines of the rock, the foliation of ironwork, the extravagance of the wood-carving. Generation after generation of them, in their conviction of a right and single purpose, brought about miraculously this show of intrinsic human values.

The majesty of Seville's old sign of the integrity of the populace is above the edicts, bulls, prescriptions, enactments, impositions and requisitions of kings, cabinets, popes, dictators, presidents, or what not. All that is reduced to litter. One never did fully trust those notables, nor ever feel sure their commands were directed to welfare. But there is nothing strange in that. What is strange and important is that of late we have lost faith in the nobodies who did such work as this cathedral. That is another and more serious matter.

To lose faith in our fellows is to empty earth of meaning. If it is without meaning then it is absurd to maintain hope for civilization, because

H. M. Tomlinson

there is no value in a social virtue which is inapplicable to society. What would a simple priest do if one day he knew his candle lighted only a hollow?

And it is easy to-day to lose faith in the crowd, and to cease to expect resolute intelligence and intrepid fellowship to come from that. The appearance of our docile neighbour in a dutiful gas-mask will do the trick, following that recent kindly official instruction, bearing the Royal coat-of-arms, to cover our garden, and if possible the house-roof, in case of need, with a thick layer of soot and chloride of lime against the fall of a ghastly dew from heaven which blinds, and rots the lungs. It is as if you saw above your neighbour's collar, or in the portrait of a premier, not the face of a man, but a death's head. Common-sense is horrified. Is this real? Then those eye-sockets mock human effort. We must find the courage to admit it.

Brains have turned to blow-flies if in the common routine of the home we must see we get our anti-vesicant and chloride of lime with the bread and butter, and beside the infant's cot at night leave with our blessing and the doll the babe's dear little gas-mask. The Magi never thought of that gift.

When life falls to imbecility it would be better to blot it out; let the desert come. Our present casual indifference to corruption lying at the very brink of the fount of life; our acceptance of diabolism as a natural stink and infection in the heart of the commune, no more avoidable than rain on Christmas Day, would show that mind has ceased its aspiration to light and loveliness, being foul.

Must we accept that? Is the gener-

ous spirit gone which shaped the cathedrals? Sometimes it seems so. The surrender of the multitudes everywhere, apathetic and disheartened, to governance which announces its purpose to refine from knowledge and intelligence all surprises till there issues only a uniform and reliable drive for national machinery, and to throw mercy to the dogs, has made some of us wonder whether in future democracy will have more power to will its orientation than sheep have in the choice of a slaughter-house.

And if there is to be always a likelihood that any night, and without notice, our bodies may be turned into slime, and the inventions and work of centuries to trash, because statesmen on appeal can see nothing better to do with them, then it might be fun to be anarchs, and spend what good things we have in one jolly burst, one last orgy, while the opportunity is yet unsloughed by chemicals, rather than wait to drop off like greenfly under an insecticide.

That is where we are to-day. To that dead-end have the devices of Europe's leaders brought the people of a continent. Is there any testimony to justify our trust in those men, as a cathedral stands for the value of the mob? There is. The craft and creative energy of statesmen for generations in organizing victory is a mountain of war-debts so high that nobody knows where in the clouds it ends. They did that.

So appalling a monument, quite shapeless, for it cannot be pictured, and so obstructive to the sun that things will not grow under it, is the testimony to their genius for building; though they

Morning in Seville

hint that they are preparing the base for a greater one; yet honestly admit, at present, that destruction next time may not afford them sufficient material to carry on national war before eternal night, in which there will be nobody either to admire or hang them, puts an end to their enterprize.

That can only mean that we may throw hope to the dogs, as our leaders have thrown mercy, but for one thing. It is not democracy which has failed, but the statesmen. Their Promised Land turns out to be the Wilderness, but they know of no way out; they propose instead that we should be suitable wolves. Democracy has never been tried; it has been only fooled.

Luckily, we know that the good nature of ordinary folk readily responds to the simple and magnanimous appeal, if it come. They are the last to be corrupted. The common man, almost always, is a kindly and helpful fellow. The power of a government is never complete without his corruption or subjection, for power has no continuance but in the credulity and obedience of the simple.

If simple men cannot save us, then

we are lost. What they could do with a revivifying idea Seville's great fabric is the sign. It is, in the bulk, the work of nameless men. Even its architects are unknown.

It is a testimony to the fellow who had a good thought to make manifest with his hands while living on bread and onions. There was an army of them, for a century and more, labouring at this. They must have had conflicting interests, but the job reconciled all. They could not expect to see the sun upon their completed task, nor hear applause for its success.

Some quarried the rock, others set the masonry, or carved timber, or made the glass, or hammered tendrils of leaves for the bronze and iron gates. They were all in it, foresters, quarrymen, blacksmiths, builders, priests and architects, hewers of wood and drawers of water. They believed in something and meant to give it form.

There it is now, and there is no more to be said about it than there is of great music. Harmonious and triumphant, it attests to the power of a transfiguring conviction, and not of war, but of peace.

Aunt Felicia

by H. H. Bashford

AMONGST my earliest recollections of the material universe is that of a slightly extended forefinger – as I afterwards knew it to be – describing circles of a diminishing and approaching circumference and finally burying itself in my pectoral garments with an extremely pleasant sensation. It was accompanied by sounds equally agreeable that began to define themselves, in the process of years, as two words spoken just deliberately enough to have escaped being a drawl. The words were Wer-iggy, wer-iggy; and I presently realized that they were uttered by a person who was always the same person and who was ultimately to become recognized by me as Aunt Wiggy-wiggy. She was the oldest, I discovered, of four maiden ladies who periodically appeared and called my mother Eleanor. They were her sisters, it seemed, and their names were Felicia, Caroline, Rose and Ruth. Aunt Wiggy-wiggy was Felicia, and, by the time I had grasped this, she must have been something over forty.

Later I was to learn that, in the Mayfair rectory, where they had all been children together and afterwards young women, she had assumed the privileges of seniority in no uncertain fashion; and the temperamental gulfs

that this had deepened between them were never to be wholly bridged. But the conversation of my aunts was seldom personal; none of them had any small talk at all; and it was not until Aunt Felicia was dead that the youngest of her sisters – herself over seventy then – referred to these matters.

Not even my mother, for instance, had ever hinted – such things were not talked about – that their own mother had been unhappy, or that their father, worshipped in fear as the life-long rector of London's most distinguished church, had never quite overcome, in his relations with her, a sense of social inferiority. There had apparently not been love enough, although she had borne him seven children, to make this possible under Victorian canons; and when she had died, though he had continued to preach his unimpassioned, scholarly sermons and to officiate at the weddings of peers and statesmen in the only church then thought possible for such ceremonies, the rectory had become merely an office, with five secluded young women keeping out of sight till the butler sounded the gong for meals.

For the first few years governesses had been included in the household; the sisters were taught to paint and play the piano; and there were occa-

Aunt Felicia

sional visits for tea in the nursery from maternal aunts and cousins. But their elder brother, who was studying to be an engineer, never ventured to bring any of his friends home; the younger had died after a year or two at Harrow and a few months in lodgings at Torquay; and the five sisters had grown up in an isolation where they were entirely dependent upon their own imaginative resources – where they were necessarily at the mercy, without means of escape, of each other's habits and idiosyncrasies; to which music and books were admitted, but never the people who wrote or discussed them; in which the problems of sex and its natural desires were unthinkable beyond contemplation; into which no young man was ever invited, or probably even thought of attempting to penetrate; and in which they were as ignorant of their contemporary social world as if they had been living in an Eskimo settlement.

Aunt Felicia was still in her teens when this *régime* had closed down upon them and a woman of over thirty when it came to an end. But, as the eldest of the family, she had at least enjoyed advantages that were never to be shared by her younger sisters. For two or three years after her mother had died, and before her father gave up entertaining altogether, she had been allowed to preside at an occasional dinner-party and return calls in her mother's stead. More than any of my other aunts too, she had inherited from her mother certain seigneurial characteristics – the upright carriage, indomitable blue eyes, and aquiline features of a once land-owning family; and although, when I first became aware of

her as a separate person, she was actually living in a bed-sitting-room at Croydon, it was not very long before I began to recognize in her something that set her apart from my other aunts.

Had fate willed otherwise, had she become the mistress of acres for which nature had so obviously designed her – for which as a girl, indeed, her birth and good looks might so reasonably have persuaded her that she was destined – this might easily have embraced, as I afterwards saw, a certain element of tyranny. But the dreams, if they had existed, had long ago died. I doubt if they had ever been mourned. And anyway, for a small boy, to whom she was still Aunt Wiggly-wiggly, such perceptions were not yet on the horizon.

It had not even occurred to me that she was poor; that all my other aunts were poor. Poor persons were different. Aunt Felicia occasionally mentioned them and evidently did not include herself in their number. By then we also, my mother and brother and I, were living in three rooms in a place called Shepherd's Bush. But money was a subject that was never referred to, or so I divined, by people who were not the poor. It was something mysteriously allotted by God, like the shape of people's noses or impediments in the speech – too personal and private to be discussed with decency; it was only the vulgar who were inquisitive about money.

It was not until I had grown up, therefore, that I learned the financial history of all that happened since my grandfather's death – how the five sisters, sufficiently provided for, but with no practical knowledge of how to use independence, had continued to live

H. H. Bashford

together almost automatically in a large house near Gloucester Road. This had been taken for them, it seemed, by their elder brother – of whom Aunt Felicia was a blind adorer – and here they had lived much as before for the next two or three years. Occasionally, as in their rectory days, they had gone to concerts and picture galleries. More occasionally still, they had visited their country cousins. But for the rest they had continued to paint and play the piano, to read aloud and sing glees – ‘White sands and grey sands. Who’ll buy my white sands? Who’ll buy my gre-e-ey sands?’

By an astonishing chance, however, an elderly widower had then happened to meet and marry my mother; and it was in the year after the wedding that the sisters had met with their final calamity. Not only had their elder brother, who was their sole trustee, lost all his own property and his wife’s, but, with the exception of a small mortgage belonging to my Aunt Ruth, that of his five sisters as well. Whether this was due to his fault or his folly – Aunt Felicia would never admit it to be either – I was never to learn; and indeed I regarded him as a rather heroic and attractive figure. Following my father’s death, when I was three years old, and before our own financial collapse when I was seven, he was an occasional visitor at our Kensington house; and he once gave me a purse that he had brought home from Morocco. But I never saw him again; he had apparently left his eighteen-year-old wife to bring up her baby as best she could; and although I cherished the purse through most of my schooldays, it was ultimately ex-

changed, I believe, for a volume by Mr. Henty.

Of the five sisters, therefore, in the year of Queen Victoria’s jubilee, my mother, who had eighty pounds a year, was the richest, though not quite so affluent perhaps as my Aunt Ruth, whose income was twenty pounds less but who had no sons to educate. Aunt Felicia, Aunt Caroline and Aunt Rose were, in the strictest sense of the word, penniless save in so far as they had been able to realize their precise value in the world’s labour market. Since they had never been to school, or passed an examination, this was not of course extravagant. Aunt Caroline, Aunt Rose and Aunt Ruth, by virtue of their gentility and comparative youth, had become inexpensive governesses in what Aunt Felicia would have termed – but only if she had been asked – middle-class households. And Aunt Felicia herself, facing the world at forty, and without the remotest idea how to cook or clean anything, had taken an unfurnished room in a back street of Croydon as a teacher of painting and drawing.

If Aunt Felicia, therefore, had ever wielded the sceptre, as looking back I can well believe, her sceptre days had been buried, when I first knew her, with whatever dreams she may have had in girlhood. It was true that, when two or three of my aunts were gathered together, there was never any doubt as to which of them had once been queen. But in later life, at any rate, Aunt Felicia was a realist who never wasted emotion upon what had happened yesterday. If Providence had seen fit to remove her sisters’ incomes, well that was that; they must all do

Aunt Felicia

the best they could. Had her own income not been removed as well, it would have been her unquestioned duty, of course, to provide for them; and, as the eldest of the family and physically the strongest, there could naturally have been no other administrator. But Providence had decided otherwise; and it would never have occurred to her, even remotely, to question its wisdom. Though she never discussed religion as my mother did, she had been brought up in the Anglican Church; and in spite of a freshness of outlook that never faded, her religious convictions remained a closed chapter. They had been settled once for all. Religion, like sex, was not a thing to be talked about.

That being so then, her task had become plain and would probably occupy an indefinite number of years. If she could no longer govern her sisters, she must at least never become a burden upon them, or upon anybody else for the matter of that. Nor did she, although she was to live to be eighty-nine and see all but one of them into their graves; and from the first week in Croydon she had imposed upon herself the discipline of saving up for an eventual annuity. As Aunt Ruth in her own seventies gently reflected, it must have been a hard and thrifty ordeal; and exactly how hard and how severely thrifty nobody but Aunt Felicia was ever to know. But she had steadfastly refused to accept help from anybody, and her pride – if that was the name for it – did not meet with a substantial fall. Her talent for painting was real, if a little sentimental; she had obtained a post in a neighbouring school; and she enjoyed the flawless

health of a necessarily abstemious life, though she had the appetite of a school-boy when opportunity offered.

Moreover, she had certain assets of which she was either unaware or took completely for granted. For all the seclusion of her Mayfair upbringing, she was a born adventurer entirely without fear; and in the direst contrivances to which poverty compelled her, she never exhibited the slightest *gêne*. Thus I have a remembrance of her, when she must have been about sixty-eight and coming to stay with my wife and myself, serenely dragging a large trunk along the pavement of our Hampstead street. She had already dragged it along another on her way from the local station. But why not? It had been perfectly simple. Her eyebrows had arched themselves above her sea-blue eyes. She was in plenty of time, and why should she have spent a shilling upon an outside porter?

She had always possessed the gift too – or at any rate as long as I had known her – of completely identifying herself with her surroundings without abating a jot of her own private principles or perceiving the necessity for so doing. That was one of her reasons, I think, why landladies and their servants, not to say children, so instantly liked her. If she carried herself like a *grand dame*, as she undoubtedly did, it was because she really was one, whatever she happened to be doing; and her interest in the concerns of others was as entirely devoid of sham as it was scrupulous in respecting even the smallest boy's point of view. That was one of the lessons, perhaps, that she had learned in adversity; and it became

H. H. Bashford

more marked as the years went by. But it had already made her, when I was a boy at school, as good a companion as an aunt might be expected to be.

By then we were living in the Midlands in a small country town, famous for the cheapness of its education; and Aunt Felicia, the Croydon school having been disbanded, had become housekeeper-governess in the family of a widower at Norwich. But she stayed with us periodically, paying for her board, and although she was an occasional source of personal embarrassment, she was always ready to admit, after a momentary blue stare, that this was due to her own ignorance. However handsome, for instance, she might consider the cricket captain, just then engaged in compiling fifty runs, it would be quite impossible for me, being in the lower third, to effect an introduction when his innings was over. He wouldn't even know who I was myself. But did that matter? Yes, it mattered exceedingly. Well, he *was* handsome, wasn't he? And since she had conceded my point, I was content to admit hers.

She had also, about this time, learned to ride a tricycle; and I suffered a good deal from her enthusiastic insistence that we should go for rides together upon a hired machine built for the purpose of accommodating two. This was difficult to refuse, as I was known to be fond of tricycling, and she always paid the man at the shop; and although I piloted her out of the town as quickly as possible, it was seldom without escaping observation. When we rode tandem, I was to some extent able, of course, to ignore that an

aunt happened to be behind me. But unfortunately she preferred a machine, known as a 'sociable', of which the occupants rode side by side. This was not only unwieldy on account of its immense breadth, necessitating long pauses in the presence of traffic, but it implied a deliberateness in the choice of one's companion from which there was no possible escape. Finally, having run the gauntlet, in what should have been an empty side-street, of some members of my form and a portion of the second eleven, I succeeded in wrecking this machine, to my intense relief, without damaging Aunt Felicia.

But for idle hours at home or upon a country holiday Aunt Felicia was always a dependable person. Having made her mistakes, she seldom repeated them, and she never forgot the names of my friends. This was gratifying to them and a source of satisfaction to me; and it enabled me to stress her essential importance. I could refer to the facts that she had climbed Helvellyn and was able to paint jolly good pictures. She had also been to Switzerland and could talk in French and German, which was more, I felt, than could be said of many aunts. Being an adventurer herself too, she had no nonsensical ideas about the incapacities of other people; and it was upon her invitation that I was once bidden to take my brother to spend a fortnight with her in Wales. It was a complicated journey with four changes, my brother being ten at the time and myself eleven; but there was never a hint from her, when we ultimately arrived, that it had been anything but an everyday occurrence.

Aunt Felicia

All through my schooldays and the two years that I afterwards spent in Canada, Aunt Felicia continued to be a governess. Save for a brief term, after which she declined to stay any longer, in the house of a very distinguished but pugnacious baronet, she was apparently happy; and with many of her pupils she maintained a life-long correspondence. But she was now in the middle fifties. She was becoming a little deaf. She had accumulated enough money to buy herself a small annuity. And she suddenly decided to pay a visit to South Africa, where my Aunt Ruth was then living as a nurse. She travelled out steerage, meeting, as she afterwards told us, several most interesting fellow-voyagers; and for nearly a year she wandered about the Karroo, staying with her sister and her sister's farmer friends. She also sold some pictures there, enough at any rate to pay part of her fare back; and when she returned to England her deafness had so increased that her governess days were clearly over. She therefore went back to Croydon, where she had one or two friends, found another bed-sitting-room in a back street, purchased an ear trumpet, and began to live on a pound a week and whatever she could earn with her paint-brush.

This was not very much, though she sold an occasional picture and managed to obtain two or three pupils. But at least she had an income now which was sufficient for her needs and even enabled her to save a little and contribute to charity. By a fortunate chance, too, since she disliked cooking, there was an eating-house for workmen on the opposite side of the street; and every day, at one o'clock, she crossed

the road with a plate, which was filled with meat and vegetables for sixpence. When I lunched with her, as I sometimes did, we would do this together, since Aunt Felicia liked to take the air, the very respectable people (as she called them) who kept the eating-house providing us with covers for the return journey.

I was then studying medicine, a subject in which Aunt Felicia had no personal interest, although she regarded its practice as a career that was undoubtedly useful. In her younger days, of course, doctors were not the sort of people that were usually called upon. But times had changed; and she was a great admirer of Luke Fildes' celebrated picture. Realist as she was, indeed, there was a considerable strain in her, as her painting showed, of sentimentalism; and once she had made up her mind or her heart to worship anybody, she did so thoroughly and without reservations. Evidence, however undeniable, derogatory to her hero would be loftily brushed aside or flatly ignored; and for a considerable time, during this second Croydon sojourn, she employed herself upon a novel about the Duke of Wellington. It was written, entirely without paragraphs, in her usual firm and deliberate hand; and although it was never published or, as far as I know, even submitted to a publisher, few more god-like figures can ever have been enshrined in a work of fiction.

Such was her life for the next six or seven years, with a few weeks' holiday every summer, when she would perhaps share lodgings with one of her sisters, preferably in a place where there were mountains, or pay a visit to

H. H. Bashford

one of the country houses of some ancestral survivor. But at the age of sixty-two, having been persuaded to join a tour round the coast of Norway, she returned so entranced that she resolved to make Norway her home. For one thing, it was a country, she had found, where she could live very cheaply, although she now had sixty pounds a year; and for another it appeared to be relatively immune from thunder and lightning, the only two things of which she was really afraid. It was also beautiful with the grave, early morning beauty that appealed to her most strongly; and the Norwegians that she had encountered, especially in the remoter north, had been people after her own heart.

In the following year, therefore, with a couple of boxes, her ear trumpet and her tricycle, she said good-bye to Croydon, and for the next eight years I never knew exactly where she was. Letters would occasionally arrive from her, sometimes from Christiania — where she had sold a picture, she once wrote, to the queen — but more frequently from places that could only have been found upon a large-scale ordnance map. But she hurried back for my mother's last illness and again, two or three years after I was married, in connection with a legacy from an aunt of her own, which enabled her to buy another annuity.

That must have been the occasion, I think, upon which she came to stay with us, dragging her luggage along the pavement; and although she casually mentioned that she was becoming a trifle rheumatic, she appeared to be as vigorous as ever. Apart from this, indeed, and her deafness, I doubt if she

had ever been conscious of a physical function or known what it was, except occasionally at sea, to feel other than ready for a meal. Even her deafness and rheumatism she seemed to regard quite objectively as curious tenants that had apparently to stay with her; and she would listen with amusement, she told us, to the noises going on in her head that were sometimes like trains and sometimes like fifes and drums.

'They tell me it's due to the blood,' she explained, 'going round and round,' and she was once discovered chuckling in our bathroom. She had been peering in astonishment at our modest array of household bottles and jars of ointment. One of them was in her hand.

'What on earth,' she inquired, 'is cascara sagrada?'

But her stay was brief. England was too relaxing; and some months afterwards we received a letter from her, from which it appeared that she was spending the summer in the Lofoten Islands. Later she wrote from a small town somewhere near the mouth of the Nord Fjord; and though her letters were rare and assumed a degree of local knowledge that we did not usually possess, we were able to glean from them that she was fully maintaining her particular interests in life. Though she was relatively unmoved by contemporary politics, she was evidently keeping in touch with English literature in so far as this avoided any discussion of religion or the relations between the sexes; and having mastered Norwegian she would occasionally recommend us to read the works of various Scandinavian authors. For the most part, however, her letters were concerned with the new church

Aunt Felicia

built by Pastor This, the concert organized by Fru That, and the scholastic achievements of their respective children. There was also a period, I remember, when she seemed to be toying with the idea of buying a derelict cottage which could be purchased for thirty shillings; and it was only her rheumatism, I believe, that prevented her from paying a visit to Spitzbergen.

But with the coming of the Great War I learned from my Aunt Rose that she had returned to the British Isles; and it was in January 1915 that I received a long letter from her written from a town in the north of Scotland. It was the first time that I had heard from her for about a year, and although her rheumatism, she said, had become worse, she had found comfortable lodgings and was knitting garments for those engaged upon the task of mine-sweeping. As for the War itself, she was apparently taking it for granted as one of the many that she now remembered, which included those of her childhood in India and the Crimea, wars in Egypt and Afghanistan, the war of the 'seventies between France and Germany, in which her sympathies had been entirely Teutonic, the war in South Africa, which she had followed with some interest, owing to her previous visit to my Aunt Ruth, the war between Russia and Japan, which had been too far off for any intimate concern, the war between Spain and America, and various smaller ones that had appeared, from time to time, in the *Morning Post*.

But wars were not activities in which, as a woman, it had been her duty to play any part, though she would doubtless have done so had she been a professional soldier like her

maternal uncles and great-uncles. They were recurring occasions for the display of male heroism, tempered with mercy for the vanquished; and when England happened to be participating, there was generally somebody like the Duke of Wellington or Lord Roberts to see that she won. It would be the same now, of course, in the end, which would not, she hoped, be unduly delayed; and it was distressing to read of so many brave young men giving up their lives for their country. But all that was implied in being a young man at all. Had she been one herself, she would have assumed it without question; and meanwhile—though of course she did not write all this—she had laid aside her painting to knit mufflers for them. It was the job in front of her in her Scotch lodgings; and 'we too,' she concluded, 'have not been without our tragedies, as a young lady walked off the end of the pier here on Septuagesima Sunday.'

When the War was over and I saw Aunt Felicia again, she was seventy-six; and although she had been tempted to do so, she had come to the conclusion that she was now too deaf and rather too lame to go back to Norway. Aunt Caroline having died, therefore, a few years before in the general ward of a south-country hospital, and Aunt Ruth being still in South Africa, she decided to go and live near Aunt Rose. She too, after forty years of governing, had saved up enough money to retire, and was now living in a bed-sitting-room at St. Leonards-on-Sea. If they had lived together, now that Aunt Felicia had a hundred and

H. H. Bashford

twenty pounds a year, they might even have been able to take three rooms and enjoy the services of a maid. But Aunt Rose, though she was rather like a dormouse, had developed her own personality; and with possible memories of what Aunt Felicia had once been, she refused to be stirred from her chosen nest. So the two old ladies dwelt a few doors apart; and although they attended different churches – Aunt Felicia preferring a ritual slightly more elaborate than Aunt Rose considered necessary – they met every day for a walk on the front, and occasionally took tea with each other in their respective rooms.

Sometimes I would visit them for a few hours, finding Aunt Felicia a little bent, but with her eyes as bright in her clear, wrinkled face as when she had been the Aunt Felicia of my school-days. She would show me the calendars that she was busy painting for some imminent church bazaar or in aid of a society for educating Armenian children in which she had lately become deeply interested. She would also insist, though her legs were now very painful, in limping her determined mile along the sea-front; and she would generally have something to tell me about her last or approaching summer holiday. These were now spent in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor, for which she had conceived one of her romantic attachments; and history so far repeated itself that, on one occasion, she invited two of my daughters to stay with her there.

She could no longer tire them out with walking as once she had tired my brother and myself; and since she was stone-deaf now and the children dis-

liked shouting, she was content to imagine with a smile what they were saying to each other. But she let them go their own ways – they were fourteen and eleven – and if these involved long motor-drives with the local butcher-boy, she accepted the position without comment, and retired to bed presuming that they would eventually come in. It was a little strange perhaps. But each generation had its own ways – an ordinance of Providence for which there was much to be said; and had butcher-boys with motor cars been available seventy years ago, she would doubtless have acted as they were doing. In fact, as great-aunts went, I was given to understand that she had behaved not too badly.

But the rheumatism increased. My Aunt Ruth, who had returned from South Africa, found St. Leonard's too cold; and Aunt Felicia and her youngest sister ultimately moved to a suburb of Bournemouth. She was eighty-six then and very crippled, though she still rose and dressed herself unaided; and I found her in an armchair, on my first visit, in the little parlour that they could now afford. Her spectacles had slipped to the volume in her lap – a collection of poems by Maurice Baring – and after the usual family inquiries, she began to discuss them as though all time lay before us both. I wish now that I had gone to see her oftener. But the months slid by and became years; and when I received a telegram one day from Aunt Ruth it was to say that Aunt Felicia seemed to be rather seriously ill.

She had grown very small, as old people do, and I am not quite sure if

Aunt Felicia

she knew who I was, her main concern being to get up and dress, since she had become so tired, she said, of lying in bed. I have various friends who believe very strongly in the theory of old and young souls; and if they are right, the soul that inhabited Aunt

Felicia, and perhaps was her, must surely have been a young one. I had hoped to see her again. But the next time I went down I was a few hours too late. The lids had dropped, I found, for the last time over her April eyes.

Lambstails for Luncheon

by Anne Fremantle

‘UNCLE REU-BEN! Uncle Reu-ben! Where have you got to?’ The child’s voice stumbled clumsily into hearing, getting nearer and nearer, finding him out. Reuben swore aloud. He had almost forgotten, painting alone in the fields, that he was a human being burdened with the gift of speech, and it seemed the lambs scampering ecstatically, the yellow woodpeckers and the pigeons in the wood beyond, whose bleating and calling seemed not to break the silence but only to emphasize and accentuate it, were likewise forgetful of his humanity, and accepted him as part of the furniture of their world. But the panting boy, who, on arrival, flung himself breathlessly down on the grass, was an alien, an invader. The sheep scattered at his coming, and their lambs, after an inquisitive stare or two, followed.

‘It’s dinner time, and Mum says you’re to come quick, or Mrs. Grey’s lovely steak and kidney pudding will be all spoilt.’

Reuben cursed himself for not having taken sandwiches, but repressed the ‘for God’s sake run away and leave me in peace, can’t you see I’m busy’ – that came to his lips. Instead, putting down palette and brushes, he said meekly, ‘all right, sonny. I’ll be along

in a couple of shakes of a lamb’s tail. You go back and tell ’em to begin. For after all it was only by Miriam’s kindness that he was here at all, in all the intoxication of this Shropshire April. But Philip was not to be put off so easily.

‘No, no, you just come along with me,’ he said sternly. “‘Mind you bring him back yourself,” Mum said, and Mrs. Grey, she said, “and don’t lose him on the way nor yourself either”.’

Reuben sighed and gave in. ‘Very well, I’ll come. But first I must wipe my brushes or they’ll be caked and dry and useless by the time I get back. I don’t think it’s going to rain, do you?’ And he frowned up at the cloudless blue sky.

‘Rain? – I should think not,’ said Philip. ‘Look here, I’ll wipe the worst off with this long grass, and you can finish them with your paint rag.’ He seized the brushes and began energetically.

Reuben walked back to his work after lunch, his hands in his pockets, whistling aloud. He wanted to turn somersaults, to run, to walk absurd fancy ways, anything to let out some of the joy that was inside him, that welled up and up and screamed to be let out. Never had he imagined such beauty: the row of Lombardy poplars at the bottom of the farm paddock, light with

Lambstails for Luncheon

a radiance that seemed colourless, formless, bodiless, javelined the sky. The faint green of the hedges had for him an association of music, as though the growing hawthorn bushes were a crescendo of sound that had burst into tiny leaf. That such things existed, that his mind could contain them! And he felt himself part of it; that was the most marvellous miracle of them all. He knew himself for what his mirror showed him he was, a fat, beetle-like, entirely unappetizing little Jew, with cheap spectacles on his nose and spots on his chin, and hair growing out of his ears. But it didn't matter, he was in no wise discordant: the country, the spring, Nature herself accepted him. He was round-shouldered from having spent three years, aged fourteen to seventeen, varnishing the insides of hanging cupboard for a cheap furniture manufacturer. He was short-sighted from drawing by artificial light five evenings a week, and from poring over books of drawings in museums all his spare time. He was short-winded from lack of exercise and a continual diet of fish and bread and chips (mainly chips). But only one thing mattered, this glory of sun and green fields, of blue sky and things growing. He had never seen grass or trees behave as these did in the sunlight, they absorbed it so completely as to become invested with its radiance, whilst yet retaining their own colours and forms. He painted the grass green and it looked absurd, for the grass was golden, shining, alive: he painted it golden and it lost all look of grass. In despair he would fling down his brushes and stare and stare and stare. He had not seen the country

in spring before; had gone, as a child, with his parents for a fortnight in August every other year to the sea, but he had never before been there to see the daffodils that grew wild in the damp places, or the red nut catkins standing out of the purplish haze that veiled the coppice. Yet it couldn't be – surely he must always have had some share in this resurrection – surely without him there could be no sudden starring of yellow primroses along the bank, no wild quivering of wind flowers, and dog's mercury under the bare birch and chestnut saplings? It had never happened before: this was the world's first spring.

He had reached his easel, slipped on his overall, and taken up his palette. But before he began he must half-turn and look at the hills, which were a continual wonder and terror to him. He had seen mountains on the cinema: Everest and Kanchenjunga, the Andes, the Alps; but those fast fleeing, cloud-encompassed snow-capped giants, that came and startled and passed again, were far removed from the immense stateliness, the calm, distant, contented immobility of Wenlock Edge, ruddy with dead bracken, and of the hills that, motionless, yet rolled along towards Wales. Not the most majestic works of man: not Buckingham Palace nor St. Paul's, the Chelsea power station, nor the B.B.C. building, had such static dignity, such awful eternity, such unshakable, inviolable, there-ness; these were 'from everlasting to everlasting,' fixed and rigid, yet alive.

And the colour. He let his eyes slowly move from the hills over the infinite variety of fields and woods, of stray roofs and occasional streams, back

Anne Fremantle

to his painting. And remembered how, as a child, he had loved to be taken, hanging on to an elder's hand, into the local drapers to buy a reel of silk. The shop girl would pull out tray after tray of silks of all colours: reds that were his earliest loves, and pinks, then blues whose litany of names he was only to learn later, then the whole gamut of greens from veridian to aquamarine, then yellows, then browns. As he grew older and went to play in the parks, he had discovered crocuses and tulips, pansies and wallflowers, the continual sequence of whose colour filled the beds. He had found florists' shops and drapers, and fruit barrows. Later still, he gradually came to see colours everywhere – in the black draperies of nuns or the sudden scarlet of a costermonger's handkerchief, no less than in the road-menders' brazier or the huge red gasometers glowing fiercely in the sun. And wherever he had seen, he had worshipped. He had slaved at his nightly drawings until he won a scholarship to the R.C.A., had worked there continually, without money for fares, so he must walk tired miles of pavement for food, so often he was dizzy, and always cold; for friendships, so he could never share the college gaieties. But for paints and canvas, for etching materials and drawing paper, he saved enough. Now college was over, and he had sold five pictures and painted one portrait in the past year. Then Miriam, his eldest sister, who had married well, wrote suddenly: 'This Easter I'm going down to a farm in Shropshire with the kids, Philip and Joan have had whooping cough and their Dad thinks they need a change. If you can raise the fare,

come for a week on me.' So he came, and already three days were gone. But he couldn't face the idea of going back to his 8s. a week bed-sitter. His mind rejected the very memory of it. The stone farmhouse and kind Mrs. Grey who overfed them all and spoilt his little rats of nephews and nieces, and her farmyard full of jolly shapes and noises and smells, of pigs and geese and pails and troughs and men in corduroys, – these were real. The other was a nightmare from which now he was at last happily awakened. But he must stop thinking, stop remembering: it interfered with his work. Man might be a rational animal, but an artist was a painting one, whose reason was but an unimportant, secondary part of his make-up.

The lambs frisked and played, gambolling with infinite grace, as he longed to gambol, expressing so completely, so finally all he felt, that in painting them he was entirely satisfied. They were at once an epitome of that day of all spring days, and of all possible animal or human reactions to that day. They were the very essence of the grass and the sunlight itself, and of what sunlight and grass were to him. In painting them he both worshipped and by some strange transmutation became identified with what he worshipped.

Their shadows grew longer; became gigantic, ghostly lambs beside their bodies, as the sunlight fled across the fields and climbed up the saplings as a cat with a pack of dogs after it: then vanished. Reuben reluctantly collected his paraphernalia together and walked home, a tortoise-like figure, cluttered with easel, paint box and

Lambstails for Luncheon

canvas, proceeding absurdly through the April-coloured twilight.

He woke at six next morning and let himself out, walking through the opal mists up on to the hills. Below him the farm buildings and tallest poplars were alike hidden under a shining white cloud, whilst he was in the warm new sunlight. Then he ran down to an uproarious breakfast with Miriam, her husband, her three children and Mr. and Mrs. Grey, a breakfast of ham and eggs, stewed tea and home-made soda-bread and butter. Man cannot live by ecstasy alone, thought a full, contented Reuben as he walked to his field. But when he got there – O! unbelievable horror, there were no lambs. All had vanished and the air was rent with the lamentations of their dams. He began, disconsolate, to unpack his painting things, but what should he do, lambless? He wavered and hesitated. First he thought he would stay and paint the background, the ewes, the coppice; then, no, he decided to go elsewhere and paint perhaps the little stone bridge across the Bron. He packed up again and began to walk away, when he heard a noise that made him look up, a frenzied exaggeration of bleating at the far end of the field. A farm labourer was opening a gate, and through it, another, complete with crook, was driving back the lambs. They trotted into the field, and as their dams rushed to meet them, there was such a clamour of reunion that the tears came to Reuben's eyes for very joy and pity. His lambs were returned safe home. But – he looked again: what monster had so mutilated them? Their tails were gone. Where yesterday they had lovely ridiculous

waving things, to-day were only grotesque stumps. And the fussy ewes tried to comfort them, to heal the sore places with their tongues, but still the stumps gaped in the sunlight, and the flies began to collect round them and to settle on the poor open wounds. For one mad instant Reuben thought of rushing upon the labourers, throttling them, somehow hurting, avenging with his hands the innocent beasts. Then remembered how hopelessly inadequate such action must be – laughable in itself and powerless to restore what had been destroyed for ever. How hateful men were! Faced with the transcendent beauty of spring, of the Easter-glorious country, with the joy of the lambs that was the very incarnation of resurgent earth, their first thought, their only action was to waste, to destroy, to vilify, to hurt. There could be no redemption for such creatures; the saving power of the spring could not touch them, the blessed healing offered by nature only magnified their refusal of her gifts. The sunlight and blue sky mocked Reuben's misery: the spring regarded him as the accomplice of these torturers; he could never face the lambs again, nor paint them. His picture and his pleasure were ruined, spoilt. He gave one long last look at the agonizing scene, then fled. He spent the rest of the morning in the coppice, sitting on a wood pile. His faith, his pride, his whole vision of the universe had suffered a horrible shock, and, powerless to react against it, he sat and gloomed. At last, after hours of misery, or so it seemed to him, he started to go back to the farm. As he passed on his way he could not refrain from a horrified, fascinated glance at

Anne Fremantle

the field of blood; the lambs were grazing now or asleep in the grass; though none were gambolling or gay, none seemed actively in pain. He reached home, shying like a startled horse at every man he saw and scrambling up into his own room as though fearing pursuit. A pleasant smell of cooking dinner penetrated, a warm gravyish smell that comforted Reuben not a little. It made him feel as though not everything were tragic or grim, or lost; the homely appetites which man shares with the kindly beasts at least reduced him to a common carnality and therein lay hope.

The dinner bell sounded, and Reuben combed his hair, straightened his tie and went down. They were all assembled – a bunch of cowslips, the first he had seen, was on the table.

‘Look what Alice found’ – Joan ran up to him and pointed to the flowers.

Mrs. Grey brought in a huge dish, savoury, steaming, rich brown, piled high with meat, ‘Ere’s a h’unexpected treat for you all,’ she said, ‘nice juicy lambs’ tails! Now what do you say to that?’

.

At Home and Abroad

I

An Open Letter to any Member of the Travel Association

by Clive Bell

SIR,

The fact that my interests are to some extent involved in your aims emboldens me, a stranger, to address you. For your aims, if I understand them aright, are to induce foreign tourists to come to England and to induce English holiday-makers to stay at home. Towards these, if you can spare me ten minutes of your time, I may be able to direct you; at least I can tell you why two of my foreign friends will not again come to Britain, and why Mr. Hubert Prince, of the shirt and collar department, and I always spend our holidays (which means our spare cash) abroad. That is the sort of information you want, isn't it?

I had better introduce my witnesses. Of me, I dare say, you know already as much as you care to know. Of my friend, Mrs. Norman Castle, all you need to know is that she is an American lady of means, spirit and other attractions. Monsieur Albert Durand once wrote a play, but do not

let that discourage you, he is now on the staff of an important daily paper a little to the right of left-centre. While Mr. Prince, besides being chief of the shirt and collar department in one of our largest and most respectable stores, is a sound conservative and a pillar of the Church, as I know for certain, because he once confided to me across the counter that in his opinion the vicar a little underestimated the importance of his services.

Well, Mr. Prince, at the age of fifty-five, for the first time in his life took his holiday abroad. Instead of going to Brighton he went to Dieppe, and he came back delighted with the experiment; so delighted that the next summer he persuaded – so he assures me – no less than four of his colleagues to share with him the almost bewildering liberties and amenities of a French 'holiday-resort'. The pound has fallen, a National Government has been formed, but Mr. Prince continues to take his holiday at Dieppe, and I cannot blame him.

Clive Bell

Brighton or Dieppe? That is the question. That is the question, dear sir, for Mr. Prince and thousands like him – thousands, I mean, with a year's savings to spend on a fortnight's pleasure, thousands who are just beginning to realize what the whiting would have persuaded the snail to realize, that 'there is another shore you know upon the other side,' thousands on whom it is beginning to dawn that they are not obliged to accept, and pay for, what Brighton, Eastbourne and Margate have to offer.

The last time I spent a night at Brighton I dined well enough in the most expensive restaurant in the place. But that dinner for two, with a bottle of wine and a glass of brandy, cost well over three pounds – a price far beyond Mr. Prince's means and considerably beyond mine. Afterwards we danced – you are not to suppose that I was at Brighton with Mr. Prince – or rather began to dance; for hardly had we warmed to our amusement when, at eleven o'clock to be precise, the band stopped and the lights were put out. A waiter, with the air of imparting a dead and slightly dirty secret, confided to me that there was positively a hall in Brighton where one could make merry till midnight. And so one could; that is, if one had the stomach to be merry on cold coffee and tepid lemonade.

The last time I went to Dieppe was on a Saturday in August. My companion was violently sick all the way across; and that certainly is an argument for staying in England if you happen to be there. However, she had almost recovered by the time we came ashore, and to complete the cure went straight to the Café du

Tribunal where, sitting in the sun, watching the amusing market crowd, we drank our well-iced Pernods – at four o'clock in the afternoon too – and forgot all about the crossing. On the port we got as good a dinner as the most expensive restaurant in Brighton had been able to provide; only it cost one hundred francs instead of four hundred (the pound was at 124). Then, for a little mild gambling, to the Casino, where we could have danced for as long as we pleased; but my companion having asked me whether there was not some smaller and more amusing place, I replied that there were two I knew of where the band and floor were excellent and where one could get a good bottle of white wine. Already you are beginning to imagine that these were low haunts full of fleas and desperate characters, so let me make your mind easy at once by saying that the first people we saw as we entered were from the yacht of a respectable and highly patriotic peer. To be sure, amongst the dancers were some of the crew, but that didn't seem to make the entertainment less agreeable, so democratic and demoralizing is the atmosphere of pleasure. We danced and drank till four in the morning.

Next day being Sunday, of course we went to the races. You realize, don't you, that provincial racing in France is not the expensive, noisy, thievish affair which we avoid in England? A small crowd of sportsmen, visitors, and townspeople, with their wives and children, assemble to amuse themselves: the charges are modest, the bets more modest still, the whole thing reminds one of a cricket match during a southern week rather

At Home and Abroad

than of an English race meeting. And so back to the sea for a bathe and an apéritif with the gay throng sitting about at little tables in their beach-pyjamas and bathing-suits. The weather happened to be lovely; but I must say that if it is bathing and sitting about drinking cocktails with very little on that you like, you will do better to go to the Mediterranean.

Now I can guess what you are going to say. You are going to say that you don't like that sort of thing at all, that you don't like life at Dieppe nor at Bandol either. Wait a bit. Let me finish my account of a continental Sunday and then I will come back to your objections. Well, then, after dinner we went to a hilarious farce from the Palais Royal, which seemed funny enough after a good dinner, and certainly was funny enough to have been heavily censored in this land of the free. (May I say, in passing, that English holiday-makers appear to enjoy the sort of plays and books and papers they are not encouraged to see or read in England, since the first thing they do on reaching 'the other side' is to lay in a stock of illustrated papers – *Le Rire*, *Le Sourire*, *La Vie Parisienne* – while copies of banned English books are to be found on every stall?) Anyhow, we enjoyed our farce, which gave us a new thirst and an appetite for more dancing.

So, this sort of life, this drinking at all hours of the day and night, gambling, and sitting up late, is not at all the sort of life you want? Of course it is not; nor the sort of life I want either – every day in the year. When we are at home and at work we don't want to be having drinks all day, and we are quite ready for bed soon after mid-

night. A glass or two of wine with the excellently cooked dinner that we get in our own houses, a book, and a night-cap is all we need – and quite enough too. (It is only when, once in a way, we sup in a restaurant that we get a taste of those English ignominies of which foreigners complain.) But when we are on a holiday we want something different, something that the ghost of puritanism is still formidable enough to frighten out of England: we want to have 'a good time'. (Remember it is for holidays you are inviting foreigners to come, and urging us to stay.) Well, you may take it from me, most people's idea of a holiday is having what most people call 'a good time'; and for most the *sine qua non* of 'a good time' is having a drink when and where one wants it. Ingredients also are, looking forward to meals, looking at 'pretties', and sitting up late – which means more drinks, for no one can enjoy sitting up late on barley-water. You think I am speaking for the frivolous tourist only? Maybe most tourists are frivolous. But, in fact, I have wandered over Europe with grave historians and eminent museum officials and I can assure you that the first thing we do on arriving in a 'ville d'art' is to discover a well-placed café, take a seat, and call for a drink – a real drink. Believe me, if you want to bring foreign tourists to England, and to keep us here, the first thing your society must do is to agitate for the repeal of our ridiculous licensing laws.

'Looking forward to meals,' I said. Now listen. Mrs. Norman Castle lives in Touraine, and she spends the months of August and September touring the Continent in her car. She has a passion

Clive Bell

for sight-seeing, but she will not see the sights of England again. Perhaps she is a little greedy. She says the food in English hotels is generally uneatable, and I agree. She adds that the beds are uncomfortable. This I had not noticed; but Lady Margaret Duckworth, who also takes an interest in your movement, tells me that she often meets Americans who make the same complaint. As for the food, I shall add on my own account that it is preposterously expensive, a fact which Mrs. Castle is perhaps too rich to have noticed. Food in the provincial hotels of England has deteriorated during the last twenty years. I call to mind a noble eighteenth-century inn in one of the most enchanting towns of England. I lunched there in the summer of 1913 and found on the sideboard a fine cold joint of English beef as red as a soldier's coat, a cold saddle of mutton (English) and a well-cooked steak and kidney pie: these good things were followed by a vast fruit tart and generous jugs of thick rich cream: a ripe Stilton for those who would still be eating: no coffee, and better so — the English being at their very worst in coffee. Last summer I lunched there again; the ordinary was gone, the long table was gone, the mahogany was gone, the sideboard was gone, but there was a lounge and what was called a table d'hôte luncheon served at separate bamboo tables: *menu*, tomato soup from the bottle, a bit of stale fish eked out with pink paste, a grisly and tepid shoulder of Australian mutton with half-boiled potatoes and watery cabbage, apricots from the tin with Bird's custard, cubes of pale yellow cheese, coffee which even with milk was undrinkable. Couldn't

your society do something about the hotels?

If food in our provincial hotels is vile, so is service. Mrs. Castle, being an American lady, holds, with Socrates, that time was made for slaves. As often as not she gets up at twelve, drinks a cup of tea, and starts off on her wanderings at one. Consequently, about three she feels inclined for lunch. Would you believe it, as often as not in the best hotel of a large provincial town she is refused a meal, and is reduced to appeasing appetite with a bun and a bottle of ginger-pop at the pastrycook's? Why, only last year, at precisely 2.35 p.m., in one of the most tourist-haunted of our Sussex towns, the same thing happened to me. On the other hand, as recently as last April I was motoring near Naples with another American lady who, having eaten nothing all day, bethought her at four o'clock in the afternoon that she would like some lunch. The first possible eating place to which we came was a mere *guinguette*, a shanty overlooking the sea, whither of a summer's evening came the Neapolitans to drink and dance and enjoy the beauties of nature. I warned her that in such a place at such an hour one could hardly expect more than bread and goat's milk butter and a bottle of wine. But she, being a person used to having her own way, brushed aside this objection, and, walking in, called for the waiter, who took her order as though it were the most natural thing in the world for a young lady at four o'clock in the afternoon to want a pasta and a beef-steak and fried potatoes. And, after all, why not? The pasta was said to be excellent, the beef looked unendurably tough, I

At Home and Abroad

can answer for it that the wine was good. When I tell this story to my compatriots, they assert indignantly that no English cook could be expected to produce beef steak and fried potatoes at four o'clock in the afternoon; and they add (truly, alas!) that it is against the law of England to produce a bottle of wine at such an hour. Could you bring it home, do you think, to the public that at any rate there is no law of nature which ordains that Englishmen and women shall do less work for more money than anyone else?

Please sir, don't think I am saying that England is a bad country to live in: it is a good country to live in, but a bad one to make holiday in. At this present writing I am in the depths of a delightful country, working most of the morning, reading in the garden, drinking a glass of wine with my dinner, and going to bed betimes. I am extremely happy; but I am not having what is called 'a good time'. And when the holiday mood possesses me, I shall not motor to Brighton, only a dozen miles away, but take the boat for Dieppe and beyond: I shall not make a tour of Kent and Sussex, full though both are of charming 'sights', I shall prefer a country where one can combine sight-seeing with holiday-making.

If you really want us to spend our holidays in England you must bring the influence of your society to bear on the Government and on the hotel-keepers, too. You must allow us the amenities and amusements allowed in every civilized country on the Continent. You must deliver us from such humiliations as that of having our glasses snatched away from us at midnight – at one, as a special treat, if we have ordered a

plate of sandwiches as well. I know foreigners who have been irritated so wildly by this affront, perpetrated in restaurants where they had already paid exorbitant prices for what they were not allowed to consume, that they have vowed there and then never to set foot in England again, and have kept their vow. On Sunday nights I have seen the outrage perpetrated on unsuspecting Americans at eleven; and I have blushed for my country. And, frankly, are you not yourself humiliated when you read in *The Times* of those cases of spying and trickery at Night Clubs by *agents provocateurs* and evening-clothes men?

Now I'll tell you something about M. Albert Durand. He came to London by the twelve o'clock train from Paris, but he won't come again. On the very same day I left London by the eleven for Paris. M. Durand enjoyed an excellent lunch on the train; and so did I, because, like all experienced travellers, I waited till 2.45 and lunched on the French side: one or two greenhorns are generally cajoled into lunching on the English, and anything less appetizing than the meal served to them it would be impossible to imagine. Arrived at Calais, I walked straight to my seat, my luggage was stacked neatly at the end of the car, and in due course a civil officer came to my table and asked me whether I had anything to declare: had he wished to make sure that I was speaking the truth when I said 'no' he would have had my suit-case brought to my table and examined there. But poor M. Durand was herded into a filthy shed, where, in pandemonium, his cases were opened and his belongings roughly,

Clive Bell

rudely and dirtily tossed about. A good foretaste that of the delights of an English holiday. So far as I know there is not one single great international express on the continent – of course there may be exceptions of which I am unaware – in which passengers' luggage is not examined in the train. Why must England make an exception to this admirable rule? It would be quite easy to examine luggage on our trains, and still easier on the boat.

A month or two ago I travelled on the four o'clock from Paris, and, between Folkestone and Victoria fell into conversation with an indignant American lady, married to an Austrian. She was on her way to visit her family in the States: she had tickets – date of sailing indicated – from Vienna to New York *via* Liverpool, and she proposed to sleep one night at Claridge's. Would you believe it, in that foul shanty at Folkestone, every piece of her hand luggage – and there was plenty of it – was opened and examined with a minimum of consideration and civility? Oh, to be in England! And, as we were travelling by the four o'clock, she was obliged to eat a meal on the English train which did nothing, I can assure you, to make her think better of our country. The only help I could offer was to advise her in future to take the French boat at Cherbourg direct to New York.

I was the more humiliated by my countrymen's officious stupidity because only a week earlier, coming on the Simplon express – and remember the Simplon takes second-class passengers – from Venice to Paris I had met with very different manners. Immediately after dinner the car attendant

presented me with a document in which I was invited to declare whether or no I had any dutiable articles in my luggage. I had none. I signed the paper, went to bed, slept my way across the Swiss and French frontiers and heard no more of the matter – no, not even at the gare de Lyon: and this, although I was going to stay a week in Paris. Now, surely, if in this matter of customs the French Government can take my word, my own Government can treat me with common humanity. When I put this to one of our high officials he asserted that these drastic inquisitions were necessitated by the duty of catching drug-traffickers. Really, Mr. Dogberry, really! I have known too many of your breed to expect much sense or veracity from Government officials; but to ask me to swallow stuff of that sort is downright insolence. Not even a British Jack in office is naïf enough to suppose that drug-traffickers go through customs' houses with packets of cocaine lying about in their bags.

Meanwhile, M. Durand has reached his hotel, and what the devil is he to do next? He has no English friends: how and where is he to get a sense of London? In the public-houses? For there are no cafés, as he understands the word – no open-air cafés on the street at all events. Apparently there is something so shocking about enjoying a drink that the discreditable business must be got through furtively. Believe me, our worst enemy is this semi-demi-prohibition. For the lack of out-door cafés has nothing to do with climate. Don't you believe it. The climate of London is no worse than the climate of Paris;

At Home and Abroad

don't tell the Parisiens so. The fact is there is no public life in England because the spectacle of people enjoying themselves is offensive to the puritan rump. And that is why the only foreigners who love London are, you will find, foreigners who speak English and have English friends. No one who knows it denies that the private life, which is lived behind those rather forbidding blinds of ours, is delightful: charming and brilliant people, gay conversation, wit, fun, romps, and admirable food and drink. Yes, but that is of no use to the tourist; and when the diplomatist, *en poste* at London, speaks of the charm of English life, the tourist simply doesn't believe him. Also of what use to Mr. Prince and me are these delightful interiors when, mere tourists, we want to wander about England, sight-seeing, or to make holiday by the sea?

The only holiday-maker who seems at all likely to find what he wants in this country is the holiday-maker in search of sport; and even he apparently prefers playing golf or lawn tennis at

Cannes or Le Touquet – Le Touquet, the most horrible place I ever was in, bar Peacehaven. But even at Le Touquet, that essential amenity of French civilization, the right to enjoy oneself in one's own way is respected. And so the holiday-maker for whom golf or tennis comes first, feeling that without the right to drink when and where he likes, to gamble a bit, to dance all night if so minded, and to enjoy cheap wine and good food well served, a holiday is hardly to be called a holiday, as likely as not goes abroad.

And there you have it. You will never induce Mrs. Castle and M. Durand to come back, or Mr. Prince and me to stay, till you have made England a place where the tourist can have a good time; and you will not do that till you have repealed the licensing laws and reformed the hotels. How precisely you are to set about it I do not know. Perhaps I could give you a hint or two; but I have to catch the boat, and so good-bye and good luck to you.

CLIVE BELL.

II

Why Foreign Visitors shun England by Frank Swinnerton

I see that somebody – in this case it is Dr. Alfred Cox, general secretary of the British Health Resorts Association, – has again been saying that

grandmotherly restrictions upon the sale of liquor keep foreigners away from Great Britain. This is absurd. Although it is perfectly true that liquor

Frank Swinnerton

restrictions are a nuisance and ought to be abolished, liquor restrictions are not the cause of England's lack of charm for foreigners. If lashings of liquor were at all times available, foreigners would still give us a wide berth.

Yet we have a beautiful country, the sight of which, even in winter, takes away the breath of Americans on their way to the much less attractive Continent. Our trains, to foreign ideas small, are impressively swift and noiseless. We have many old and picturesque towns; the whole country is saturated with romantic associations; our people, although not bursting with bonhomie at sight of a visitor, even a distinguished visitor, are delightful and have the best street manners in the world. And still Americans go to the Continent, and continental citizens stay there. Why?

Because of the grandmotherly liquor restrictions, say the wiseacres. Nonsense. Foreigners are not confirmed sozzlers. The only parched travellers are Americans; and, although they pretend to be thirsty, Americans can so easily get paralytic at home by means of wood alcohol that European drinking is insipid to them.

But what does keep away the foreign visitor is the kind of food and lodging he is expected to stomach if he comes here. When one goes to America, one finds everywhere – even in towns in the far North-West which English people suppose to be outside civilization – magnificent hotels. Every room in these hotels has its own bath and toilet, with constant hot and cold water, telephone, and central heating. In many cases it is possible to get one's dirty linen washed and laundered

overnight. The rooms are clean, compact, and not expensive. Some of them are very comfortable. In the restaurants attached to the hotels food, while not first-class, is always in great variety, and the service is excellent.

Compare this with the sort of thing one finds in England, in the provinces. How many hotels in English provincial towns have a bath to each bedroom, central heating, and cleanliness equal to that of the American hotels? Precious few. You may find clean hotels, and much refinement, in seaside resorts of the better class; but the majority of English hotels outside London (and some of them in it) were built before the Flood and still mustily smell of Victorian food and furniture. You still have to march a mile to the bathroom (to find it occupied); your bedroom carpet still reveals hairpins of yesteryear, and the room itself a contemptuous assortment of sale-bought semi-antiques – table, chair, wardrobe with one coathanger, and so on. A list of rules and regulations (invented by the management) hangs upon the back of the door. Washing cannot be done overnight; unless you pay extra for coal or gas fire or – in very up-to-date hotels – electric fire, the room is as dank as a cellar. Take it or leave it; there's nothing better.

If an American visitor is ushered into such a room his heart sinks. He has arrived full of critical curiosity about the English; and he finds that the English do not welcome him. Having tried to keep himself warm, the American descends to a flyblown and very dingy dining-room, where crest-fallen waiters at last droop over his table. As a rule they are quite

At Home and Abroad

respectful, although sometimes they are accused of indifference; and they hold out a dirty menu card bearing purply the French names of roast beef, Irish stew, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, rice, custard, and boiled potatoes.

They are not ashamed of this menu, as they ought to be. They merely look and feel dirty, ill-clothed, and wretched. The American is depressed, particularly when he sees the verdigris on the salt spoon and the dirt on the blade of his decayed steel knife.

He is even more depressed when he sees the good English food which has been disguised under French names in the menu. It is terrible stuff. It is pale, stewed, watery, and repulsive. It looks as if it had been prepared wholesale for a thousand paupers in some kitchen far from salt, pepper, butter, bicarbonate of soda, and any other aid to flavour or appearance. The American struggles with the meal. At last he calls madly for drink.

He does this, however, not because he is in favour of unrestricted liquor, but because he must after all have some nourishment. The next day, after sampling at breakfast something that tastes like a mixture of meat extract and cocoa, he leaves for the Continent. To his fellow-Americans, planning a trip to Europe, he says: 'Cut out England,' and describes his experience.

On the Continent he (and of course the continental visitor) finds very bright, lively hotels, the rooms warm, bathrooms attached to many of them, the furnishings sometimes rather gimcrack but quite often new and brisk, the service full of flattering politeness (at times a sinister politeness,

but impressive), the waiters expert, and the restaurant an important place where specially prepared food is served fresh from a kitchen in which cooking is taken seriously. The insular traveller may rage against kickshaws, or French butter, Italian oil and garlic, Hungarian pepper, or German sausage. But the worst meals I have tasted in Germany and France have been bad because the cook mistakenly tried to supply a thoroughly English meal.

Now English food is as good as any in the universe. The big London hotels are unsurpassed in luxury and quality. English private houses, in my experience, are superior to any others. But for those who visit England, who cannot stay in English homes, or at the few London luxury hotels, the outlook is gloomy. It is positively ghastly.

The majority of provincial hotels are fully fifty years behind the times. They are so because the well-to-do English have never stayed in them. The well-to-do English have always travelled on the Continent. Accordingly, continental hotels have been built and furnished and equipped to attract the well-to-do English. On the Continent the English have demanded the best cooking, the most comfortable rooms, warmth and privacy. And have obtained them.

The Americans are another great race of travellers. They travel about their own country. They are always going here and there through the United States. And so big hotels have sprung up everywhere, built to give satisfaction to the travellers. They are warm, clean, new, and efficient. They have to be.

Frank Swinnerton

In England, on the other hand, since the stage coach went out of use, few people other than commercial travellers have used provincial hotels. The well-to-do have visited each other or have stayed in their own country houses. Other people have been forced to take what they could get. Now, when we should be glad to attract visitors, we find ourselves passed by.

Remove liquor restrictions, we say. Yes, certainly. But give a thought to something much more important. Make our provincial hotels compare with those of other countries. Let the

managers and staff realize that it is their business to please, even to delight every visitor. Let the food be temptingly prepared, and the rooms be clean, bright, warm, and properly equipped with bathroom and toilet. Otherwise those who are compelled to visit us will continue to warn their friends that our food is uneatable, and that our hotels are cold, dingy, and rudimentary. Until we have learnt that antiquity is one thing and ante-diluvianism another we shall be shunned by holiday-makers as a land of indigestion and discomfort. With reason.

Reviews

THE RUSSIAN JOURNALS OF MARTHA AND
CATHERINE WILMOT. Macmillan. 21s.

MARTHA WILMOT was an Irish gentlewoman who in 1803 set out to visit Princess Daschkaw, an influential and eccentric Russian. The young traveller made so favourable an impression on her distinguished hostess that their relationship quickly grew into a passionate attachment, and the visit lasted for five years. Martha Wilmot kept a journal and wrote frequent letters, yet there was so much for her to describe that the first part of the book dazzles one to blindness. Princess Daschkaw had been an intimate friend of Catherine II, and was herself a woman of vast and varied gifts. This meant that Martha Wilmot was in the centre of the 'great world' as well as being the adored friend of a woman who was a maelstrom of activity. She was seeing for the first time a land of barbaric opulence as well as learning to know a people capable of behaviour ranging from the most delicately tender to the most startlingly tyrannical. Her pages are packed almost to confusion with courtiers who bend under jewels, the pearls to embroider dresses being weighed out by the pint; dinners of a hundred dishes; swarming servants in picturesque costumes who sing with a wild melancholy, and Fools who terrified by the liberties they took. The fortunes of her hosts were so great that tropical abundance was enjoyed despite the long bitter winters, their hot-houses producing grapes as large as hen's eggs and pineapples in profusion.

The delight of Princess Daschkaw in her young friend was so moving and so sincere that it seemed Martha Wilmot might be detained in Russia for ever, so

her elder sister Catherine arrived to fetch her home. The letters which Catherine Wilmot wrote from Russia are truly brilliant. She possessed a very special quality of mind blending vivacity and detachment, as one having while still young both known the world and finished with it; added to this she had a penetrating understanding, a sparkling descriptive style, and the raillery that goes with an unimplicated point of view. She was impressed by the volcanic goodness of her hostess but by little else.

It was natural that Princess Daschkaw lived passionately in the past, that is, in the reign of Catherine II, where she had played a great role, although Alexander I was on the throne and a new era had begun. Catherine Wilmot's clear eyes saw the aged courtiers who surrounded them for the place-hunters they were. Favour was foremost in their minds, for they had lived under a despot and they knew what fantastic tyranny could do. She noted the contradictions in a people who were even then at war with France yet who aped the French in everything. She gives an interesting description of the Russian women who, holding their property in their own right, were independent and capable, and as interested in crops as a farmer. But she also saw extravagance sending great estates helter-skelter into the hands of merchants, and she records that when she asked for Russian books to read no one could give her anything but childish fables. The marvellous flowering of literature that came later in the same century as yet showed no sign.

Catherine Wilmot finally had to return without her sister, as the pain of separation was more than could be rightly

Reviews

inflicted on the ardent, generous, but ailing and lonely Princess. When the letters of Catherine cease it is a grief to the reader, for at times she writes like sun on frost, but Martha matured among such abundant life, and the second half of her correspondence is written less from the point of view of a girl overwhelmed with attentions, and more that of a woman who finds her favoured position exposing her to attacks of irrational violence. Her devotion to the Princess does not lessen, but the time comes when her sense of being in an alien country, added to the uncertainties of war, make her decide to return home. This she does, meeting shipwreck on the way, but eventually arriving safely.

The book is fascinating, clarifying and historically important. One has to remember that what is recorded is partly of an age earlier than that forming at the time. But it should also be noted that these were Irishwomen whose racial characteristics peculiarly fitted them to judge the Russians truly. Their account is valuable for its authenticity and it entrances by its charm and vivid interest.

MAKE IT NEW. Essays by EZRA POUND.
Faber & Faber. 12s. 6d.

MEN WITHOUT ART. By WYNDHAM LEWIS.
Cassell. 10s. 6d.

IN 1917, we learn from the introduction to Mr. Pound's essays, he undertook the foreign editorship of the *Little Review* 'in order that the work of Joyce, Lewis, Eliot and myself might appear promptly and regularly and in one place.' That was about the time, too, of *Blast* and *The Egoist*. Of the four names, Pound's must have been the best known and the most revered in those days. A few extracts of *Ulysses* had begun to appear; *Tarr* had

been serialized; *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* and a few other poems by Eliot were being treasured by the *avant-garde* of poetry readers – but Mr. Pound must have been the bigwig and generalissimo of the little band. Since then Joyce, Lewis and Eliot have all advanced to positions of first-rate importance, they have left their uncle behind, and Mr. Pound, a rather mysterious figure, has dodged about Europe dropping little expletive articles and verses in the background. For a time, indeed, he seems to have been forgotten altogether, except for an 'Ezra' here and there in works of Mr. Lewis, and 'I wonder what Mr. P. believes' from Mr. Eliot, for the sake of old times. But then, as mysteriously as he disappeared, he began to come back with the new tide. The dedication of one of Mr. Eliot's poems to 'il miglior fabbro' undoubtedly had a good deal to do with his return; a tip like that, to the Eliot initiate, was far too good to miss. There was a perceptible rise in the Pound. Critics began to reinvest, and Mr. F. R. Leavis, who can always be trusted to come in on a good thing, ransacked the poems for those which were least admirable, discovered *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, and in his book of 'new bearings' hailed Mr. Pound as, at last, a major poet. Since then we have had a *Selected Poems* (uniform with the *Selected Poems* of Mr. Eliot), the *Cantos*, *A B C's of Reading* and of *Economics*, a *How to Read*, an *Active Anthology*. Mr. Pound is definitely in the good books of the Cambridge minority movement; but despite these advances the wider public still prefers Joyce, Lewis, and Eliot.

Make It New is the first of a series of Mr. Pound's collected essays. The title, and the introduction, are the only parts of it which may be said to represent this new, this bigger and better, Mr. Pound; they are in his best algebraical style. But the essays themselves take us back to the good old days of *Blast*, and further even

Reviews

than that, to the *Quarterly Review* of 1912. We are back among the enthusiasms of Mr. Pound's newly discovered European culture: the Troubadours, Arnaut Daniel, Elizabethan Classicists, Greek translators, French poets (the Symbolists and after), Henry James, Rémy de Gourmont, and Cavalcanti. They are full of good matter, especially in the translations of poems, but so marred by slipshod writing and critical ineptitudes that one wonders how Mr. Pound can have allowed them to be reprinted in their present form. Even the shifts of periodical journalism – 'and that will be enough for this week' – the critical short cuts and fudge to which a reviewer must sometimes inevitably stoop, are preserved here as holy relics. Mr. Pound seems to give the impression, in his introductory notes, that the dates, the circumstances of these essays, are of immense critical importance. They are still, of course, of some interest; they represent a part of Mr. Pound's real culture (as opposed to the sort of taste which has since produced *Active Anthology*); and for the historian the post-war literature, the essay on French poets, for example, may be a valuable little signpost of the past. But even Mr. Pound's *good taste*, as we see it in places here, is far from being the pure gold we might have expected. He discovers, with a blare of surprise, what a good many people must have known already. Grant him the troubadours, the Chinese poems, which in a sense he has made his own. But had no one heard of Cavalcanti in 1910? And what of the French poets – Corbière, Laforgue, etc. – whom he assumes to be unknown to his 'Anglo-American reader,' who has however 'heard in a general way of Baudelaire and Verlaine and Mallarmé'? (This is in 1918.) Who in fact is Mr. Pound's reader, addressed in this way? From his ABC books one might assume that Mr. Pound is the popularizer of his own strangely garnered culture; but then these books are

not popular at all, they are written in a mystical algebra which would baffle any reader except an initiate. To disentangle the genuine from the false in Mr. Ezra Pound is very difficult indeed – as the reader even of the early journalistic-academic essays in *Make It New* will discover to his cost. The collection, we are told, has a 'unity' of its own; but except that we may recognize each part of it as being a piece in the Pound jigsaw, with no hope of ever fitting them all together, the assurance leaves us where we were.

Nevertheless, apart from his achievement as a poet, Mr. Pound has been, and still is, a considerable figure behind the scenes. He seems to have taught Mr. Eliot, for example, a great deal about versification. Even Mr. Wyndham Lewis, with whom he has far less in common, pays him more than perfunctory respect. But it is a relief to turn from Mr. Pound's mandarinic essays to *Men Without Art*. Whatever Mr. Lewis may lack of Mr. Pound's peculiar erudition he has a critical intelligence and a commonsense which make even a personal outburst significant by comparison. *Men Without Art* continues the examination of contemporary writers and thinkers which was begun in *The Art of Being Ruled*. There are chapters here on Hemingway, Faulkner, Eliot, I. A. Richards, Wyndham Lewis, Virginia Woolf, Henry James, Fénelon, Flaubert. The method, as those who have read his earlier criticism will expect, is cross-sectional; politics, philosophy, religion and the sciences blow a gale across the usually unruffled literary waters; not appreciation (though Mr. Lewis finds much to admire in some of these writers), but diagnosis, is his aim. It may be objected against Mr. Lewis's method that it distorts his subject before he examines it, just as the characters in his satires are freaked and frothed up into giant grotesques; but in spite of this distortion, he gives us a vivid and many-

Reviews

angled criticism which will be found in most cases to be remarkably true. And he can reveal a whole streak of rottenness in a writer which we have vaguely known but never properly explained. The slabs of Stein, for example, in Hemingway's stories are exposed at once; and even better, Mr. Lewis goes on to explain how they have got there. He quotes Stein and Hemingway side by side: it convinces. How excellent, too, is his description of the typical Hemingway-man's patter – uttered with 'bovine genius' so that it penetrates with a sort of beauty as might 'the folk-song of the baboon'! Hemingway gives us, he says, a sort of sub-literature, the monotonous undertone of the Middle-West folk-song; and the pieces of realistic reporting are, not so much written, as *stuck on*, like the real match-boxes on a Picasso portrait. He is equally good on Faulkner. From these he goes on to the assertion that the best literature today is whaleboned with satire (not, of course, true), and a large middle section of the book is devoted to a discussion of the means and aims of satire. He has a good word to say for himself, commends the *Apes* to his bolshie readers of the future, and ends with a really penetrating account of the interference, from all sides, to which any independent writer is submitted today. There are signs even, he suggests, that some future society, whether bolshie or Nazi, may consist of 'men without art.' This may not be the natural conclusion we should arrive at by reading the book up to that; but then Mr. Lewis, all through, asserts, discloses and explodes rather than argues. We do not read him so much for his conclusions (which are apt to be vague or are left over for another time), as for the bombs and sallies on the way. What he very frequently lacks in sensibility he makes up in pure energy. The element of enjoyment is strong even when he argues and criticises; better, we may feel, Lewis wrong, than Pound right.

BEASTS AND SAINTS. Translations by
HELEN WADDELL. Constable. 5s.

THE order of the words in the title is noticeable – 'Beasts and Saints' not 'Saints and Beasts'; it is a deliberate and careful order. The translator, with her natural sympathy for mood, for the atmosphere of the mind, is humble on behalf of the desert hermits and Breton and Cornish and Irish saints whose lives have given her these stories; as they were humble and unassuming on their own behalf and on behalf of humanity. For it is the essence of most of these stories that they describe an equal relationship between creatures of two different kinds. There is no idea of condescension in them. Sometimes the animal is the more active in friendship: there were two otters who came to St. Cuthbert, after he had prayed all night standing in the sea up to his neck, and 'began to busy themselves warming his feet with pantings, and trying to dry them with their fur.' Sometimes the obvious kindness is from the saint to the animal: there is, for example, the story of St. Kevin's scrupulousness; he prayed with his hand stretched out through a window, and when a black-bird took it for her nest and laid an egg in it, he kept it stretched in the same position until the young birds were hatched and ready to fly. The first story is an account of a miracle, the second not; but in the atmosphere of the book the distinction does not seem important; what is important is that sympathy, the most delightful by-product of sanctity, that could make possible a relationship so equal and harmonious, where active and passive, man and beast, higher and lower, ceased to have any meaning: as the distinction between red and yellow becomes trivial when one looks at a flame. This is the general form of most of the stories. Some are more severe, stories of saints rebuking or converting animals; and in some the saint's humility is less a natural

Reviews

grace, a part of sympathy, than a position taken up on the advice of reason. The admirable story of St. Benno is an example of this: he commanded the frogs in the marsh where he was walking to stop croaking because they disturbed his contemplation; but when they had stopped,

he called to mind the saying – ‘*O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord.*’ And fearing lest the singing of the frogs might perchance be more agreeable to God than his own praying, he again issued his command to them, that they should praise God in their accustomed fashion: and soon the air and the fields were vehement with their conversation.

Even this short quotation will show clearly enough the charm of the book, both in its substance and in the passionately simple prose of the translation; a charm reflected in Mr. Robert Gibbings’ lively woodcuts of fishes and dragons and all kinds of birds and animals. Indeed there is almost a danger that the charm of the stories may obscure their straightforward beauty; the remoteness of the setting and the naïveté of some of the authors (a different naïveté from any modern kind) may diminish the stature of the saints for some readers; just as the broken accent of a foreigner makes people feel that he is younger than he is, and for some reason touching, before they notice that his voice is beautiful, or what he is saying important. Perhaps this does not matter, so long as people enjoy a book that is before all things meant to be enjoyed.

DOSTOIEVSKY: AN INTERPRETATION. By
NICHOLAS BERDYAEV. Sheed & Ward.
6s.

It is probable that of all the influences to which the War generation was submitted that of Dostoevsky was the profoundest.

To us his books came as an Apocalypse; and just before the War began our wide and innocent eyes were staring at visions of heaven and hell. That he was other things beside, a product of Russian conditions, a humorist, a specialist in humanity, a patriot; that, as Lytton Strachey says, he gave us his walking-stick and his ‘laughter of loving kindness’ for support through an illuminated world, that meant nothing. Like General Gordon and the Bible, there was Dostoevsky and there was us; and we thought of ourselves as people, at the feet of a great daimon, alone in a Waste Land.

Ablly encouraged by Mr. Middleton Murry’s book, it became a kind of obsession, as when one reader, it is rumoured (in love with Stavrogin) felt called to imitate his behaviour in the matter of the General’s ear. From these states recovery can be rapid. A sudden ‘I’m damned if I’m going to be suggested into biting Colonel Blank’ and it was over. The thick red books with their awful secrets were put away, and no more time allowed to brood on the bitter mystery of Nikolai Stavrogin.

Something like real fear has kept his books shut ever since. Until now M. Berdyaev’s book has come to open them. While since then other forces have been at work. Aldous Huxley’s icy appraisal: ‘Dostoevsky’s characters are typical Russian parvenus to consciousness.’ Life is not ‘spiritual’ enough or ‘sinful’ enough . . . ‘to satisfy ex-moujik suddenly enriched with all the gradually accumulated cultural wealth of Europe.’ His tragedies are all ‘tragedies of mental licentiousness,’ the ‘unnecessary tragedies of self-made men,’ and so fundamentally worthless. It was some perception of this that caused an earlier disciples’ revolt and disenchantment. While, a little later, the flood of White émigrés, gave rise to a certain cynical disillusion as to the processes of the Russian mind.

Reviews

How far is Mr. Huxley's criticism true? It gives the measure of M. Berdyaev that he faces this criticism and admits it. His book is by far the most penetrating study there has been; more than a literary study, an examination of Dostoevsky in relation to final causes, love, evil, freedom, the forms of society; above all, in relation to the present and the future of the world. He speaks of Stavrogin's 'malignant and aimless eroticism,' admits the 'irreparable spiritual lack' in Russia, untrained throughout the centuries, as Europe has been trained, in the possibilities of human love.

It is for M. Berdyaev to show that his authority rests on something deeper even than the understanding of the relations between men and women. His noble and balanced mind (and what a relief he is after the all-too-sclavonic ecstasies of some writers) accounts for the greatness of Dostoevsky, not finally as a novelist, but as the man who assembled the forces of an unparalleled genius to warn the whole world that it had fallen into the third temptation of our Lord; demanded of the evil Power that he should turn the stones into bread. We need not criticise its economics, to say all Socialism rests on the assumption that man is sufficient for man, that his first concern is with material well-being; with which goes implicit denial of the spiritual life, the knowledge of God, the hope of immortality. This is the specific work of Antichrist, described in the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, the profoundest parable of our age. There, with superhuman foresight, Dostoevsky saw the choice that lay before the generations ahead.

Now the Antichrist he feared has come out of Russia herself. As again he feared; and now 'The Possessed' stands out, unique, as a story whose every event was *about* to happen.

As M. Berdyaev makes plain – so does Dostoevsky. Now that Antichrist has

come, and every man has to make up his mind on which side we see Dostoevsky standing alone, the man with more than a prophet's knowledge of our catastrophe, but also with the secret of our redemption.

THE NOISE OF HISTORY. By JOHN LEHMANN.
Hogarth Press. 3s. 6d.

THESE poems and short pieces follow 'fairly exactly,' the author tells us, the order in which they were written, and so trace 'the course of a gradually developing point of view.' The prose, much of which was written in Berlin and Vienna, begins in 1933 at the time of the Nazi rise to power, and ends shortly after the suppression of the February insurrection in Vienna.

The ideas underlying the sequence are simple and familiar. From a world of 'tricky business deals, the revelations of spiritual love, and artistic controversies in the drawing-rooms of the elegant' Mr. Lehmann turns to extol the future with a lyrical assurance, seeking in anticipation that vantage point from which

As if from the top of a mountain
The years of illness seem minute and far,
A valley rubbish-heap among the sun-swept ranges.

As an example of literary craft the volume is unexciting. In the poems Mr. Lehmann's thoughts and emotions are referred to rather than actively present in the texture and structure of his writing. Often his images are insufficiently realised. When he writes of

. . . those whose shapes are seen

Reviews

Childish against an urn or by the raft
Knotting wet ropes before . . .

the shapes in question are really not seen at all. This looseness of apprehension is most noticeable where it is most important that the reader's sympathy should be gained. Here are the representatives of positive human values in a negative world:

The sun has burnt their faces and their open necks, their quiet hands and the smooth bare legs above the dusty socks and only pair of shoes. Their eyes are watchful and secretly laughing. Their talk is of football and swimming, or how to mend ski-ing boots, or the places they have seen in their wanderings. And some, too, have caught the fire of an idea, and discuss a new shape of life, and the struggle that will achieve it.

One feels, uneasily, that it is a matter of chance whether these simple athletes catch the fire of the Fascist idea, or the Marxist idea, or (what is more probable) the Buchmanite idea. Their talk is of football and swimming, and it is likely that they would have been the first to respond to the most popular of the Georgians when he envisaged those who took arms in the world war as 'swimmers into cleanness leaping.' The urge towards a new way of life, a change of heart, is commendable; but it is doubtful if the new life can be sung into being; and it is prudent in the meantime to enquire in what direction our poets would lead us. Poetic afflatus, unsupported by an alert and adult intelligence, may do more to confuse than resolve our present difficulties.

Mr. Lehmann's prose pieces, closer to actual scenes and events, are more successful than his poems. Suffering and fear are genuine presences in these sketches of oppressed and stricken cities.

RESURRECTION. By W. GERHARDI. Cassell.
7s. 6d.

THE ENDLESS FURROW. By A. G. STREET.
Faber. 7s. 6d.

CAPTAIN NICHOLAS. By HUGH WALPOLE.
Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

AT SEA. By A. CALDER-MARSHALL. Cape.
7s. 6d.

THREE MEN DIE. By SARAH G. MILLIN.
Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.

Mr. GERHARDI bases his novel on an unusual experience of his own. While sleeping in his flat he found that he was in what he names his 'astral body' actually moving about the room. He was connected by a band of light with the body which still lay on the bed, and he could with ease and swiftness pass through the walls and rise to the ceiling. After making a round of his flat and noting various things which he afterwards verified he returned to the figure on the bed and re-entered it.

This happened just before Mr. Gerhardt started to dress for a ball. His book is the span of the ball, and his strange experience is used as a lamp which he plays on his fellow guests. He tells everyone he meets of what has so recently happened to him, and their reactions are varieties of vapidty until he meets a scientist who discusses with him Dunne's *An Experiment with Time* (How the interest in this book mounts and spreads, an engineer having most aptly given the machine age mathematical proof of immortality!) They recall Dunne's theory that each of us consists of an infinite number of 'Observers' of whom only the lowest is perishable. They decide that Observer 2 must have a body and that it was in this four-dimensional one that Mr. Gerhardt had moved about his rooms. It will be seen how excitingly full of possibilities these suppositions are, and as Mr.

Reviews

Gerhardi's sophisticated Ariel wit plays with every person and incident with a kind of triple vision of seeing the thing in itself, while he also sees himself seeing it, and with great satisfaction sees himself seeing himself seeing it, he is clearly the very person to be many Observers at once. The theme and the attitude appeared perfect for a book in which Mr. Gerhardi contrived to slip back into an indefinite number of Observers, and one was tingling with anticipation as to how life as lived at the ball would appear from these far extending viewpoints. But Mr. Gerhardi, like most of us, is crippled by seeing himself, that is the self now walking about this world, as a uniquely interesting phenomenon, and he is lured away from Dunne into the Proustian evocation of his own past. He has undeniably a great gusto for immortality in terms of the things he has done while travelling and loving as Mr. Gerhardi. He plays with everyone he encounters, much as though they were bright gas-filled balloons which he mischievously strikes to inconsequence with the bladder of his own supercilious impishness; and then he introduces two of his friends, Max Fisher and Bonzo. These two characters are drawn with a masterly deftness. With Bonzo he leaves the ball for a time, and in the Green Park Mr. Gerhardi summons up his past. If the Victorian Heaven of endless musical felicity came in time to appal active modern minds, what is to be said for the Proustian-Dunne-Gerhardi conception of an endless existence for our past on this earth? It obviously depends upon how we have spent our time, and it causes one to shudder at the thought of the importance of how one occupies one's future. Since Mr. Gerhardi chose to extend backwards into the past, where his own activities were alone to be recalled, instead of outwards where a wider view might have been possible, one can only suppose that Mr. Gerhardi likes immensely

what he did. This is what it was. He went to Tunis to try and form a compatible Arabian harem. He recalls the difficulties of finding even the first recruit to his household, and as in the end it proved impossible, a past of numerous matings with bodies brown and bodies white is established for all eternity. As a past it is often funny, fairly bawdy, and entirely paltry, but Mr. Gerhardi has done it and it cannot die.

When Mr. Gerhardi returns from the ball he sleeps and is again in his astral body. Bonzo appears. He realizes that Bonzo is also in his astral body, and together they move into freedom, into an ecstatic participation in a harmonious universe. Bonzo had undergone an unsuccessful operation on the morning after the ball, and it is his death that permits Mr. Gerhardi to become a joyous guest of the dead. Regretfully he returns to his body and regretfully we finish a book that is full of searchlights casting gay beams into the night.

The Endless Furrow is a compound of sense and serenity. Baffled town dwellers will read it with deep satisfaction and feel solidity under their feet and well-being a thing possible of attainment. Mr. A. G. Street is now so well known for his writing on country life that a description of his quality is hardly necessary. His present story is extremely simple, and tells of a boy with great capacity for work who longs to be a farmer and who in the end becomes a most able one. He is first apprenticed to a grocer, a man so sapient, so sound, that the training he gives seems the ideal one for forming true judgments on all matters pertaining to man. The lad Jim Horton is shown at each stage of his career, and he never makes a mistake or becomes caught in wasteful conflict. It sounds as though the story must have something dull or smug when each step in the ascent is met with labour and foresight and rewarded by success. Yet every

Reviews

page is as fresh and interesting as though it were a revelation that gratification can be got from sensible living. In the end the old farmer having cared for his fields and his beasts through the long years of the war learns that his only son has been killed. There is no one now to take over what he has wrought all his life to perfect. Crippled and alone he still gives his last labour to the land. Mr. Street has a healing power and it lies in his making earth, growth, and the seasons his trinity of reality so that when his characters have disciplined themselves into serving these they stand rooted and integral as trees.

Captain Nicholas is good, but it is also faintly vapid like a dish containing excellent ingredients which a too relaxing atmosphere has caused to melt. Mr. Walpole introduces a family living in Smith Square who are much the usual family – devoted, silly mother, nice ten-year-old father, and knowing son and daughter. The house in Smith Square shelters as well as these a grandmother, an aunt and an uncle. These people are all genuinely fond of each other. The fondness is, of course, that good British fondness stopping decently short of understanding; but the general feeling is good. The aunt is a ninny and knows it, the uncle is a man sincerely trying to find spiritual order, and the son is both worried that he cannot fall in love, and chilled by the nihilism of his generation. The uncle and son are perhaps the best things in the book, and as they develop unmistakable intimations of solidity appear.

Captain Nicholas is the brother of the devoted mother and he turns up unexpectedly after ten years of silence. He brings with him his small daughter Lizzie whose stores of sophistication make 'What Maisie Knew' seem nothing. Captain Nicholas is given a warm welcome. Left alone for a moment he slips into his pocket some change that the silly aunt

had left on the table and thinks he may find it useful to stay on for a bit. He stays, indeed he stays for a year, and he is so engagingly frank a rotter, so plausible, with wits so much quicker than those of his respectable relatives, that the house which was amicable but dull before his arrival is positively improved by his presence. Then he begins to borrow money, continues to borrow it, induces each person to disclose the one thing they would have preferred to hide so that they find it best to placate him. He also borrows various *objets d'art* to enjoy for a few days in his room, his sense of beauty being entirely real, and these he finds it convenient to sell.

When Captain Nicholas is not with his family he is with criminals long known and newly met. It is precisely the contrast between his family and his friends that delights Captain Nicholas. To him his friends know life as it actually is, while his family are living in the softness of self-delusion idiotically believing in love, the family, and God. He realizes quite truly that his type become more numerous every day, the difficulty of living increasing their lawlessness and violence. Their lack of a livelihood makes them dislike those who have incomes, but their destruction of all values makes them even more contemptuous of those who have retained theirs. This is an age of detraction. Many feel that value has died since they can no longer find it in themselves or in others. Some, of course, feel released by its demise, but who can mistake that it is the major theme in literature to-day? We have had hollow-ness until the signs of spiritual starvation are everywhere, and each writer is saying 'There is no value,' or more rarely, 'Value lies here.' Then how apposite for Mr. Walpole to make values the theme of his book, and his story is natural and interesting when the soft, cosy mother realizes that disintegration is taking place

Reviews

in every member of her household. She combats her brother and sends him packing on the single issue of his values against theirs. Mr. Walpole handles his main idea and his human, if well-known, characters so wisely that one wishes the whole book were not somehow blanketed in a sauce of usualness.

Mr. Calder-Marshall sends to sea two young people married the day before at a registry office. They take a boat and row out to sea. The young husband rows senselessly far, they bathe from the boat, an oar is lost. Perhaps she did it when she dived, though as he had failed to ship the oars the fault is clearly his. They search and fail to find it. They quarrel. She hates him for his incompetence. He hates her for her mistrust of him. His mistrust of himself endured since childhood rises. They drift during a long hot day, through a storm, all through the night. The boat is old, which is a threat the more, and their insecurity increases the insecurity they feel in each other so that the quarrelling is renewed again and again. Her parents have always quarrelled, she sees herself continuing the life her parents lived, she sees her weak, brutal father in her young husband. She loathes him, loathes herself and in the early morning jumps from the boat and swims away to drown. He leaps in, and after a fight in the water he brings her unconscious back to the boat, revives her, and now knowing the worst in themselves and in each other they feel union between them. This is a difficult theme out of which to build a novel, but Mr. Calder-Marshall does it with originality and vividness. His style is sharp and eager, if at times it sinks to affectation, and subtlety is shown when these warring child minds sink back into their memories. Their sense of emptiness in themselves, of containing nothing but self-scorn, and their dismay at how little support the other has to give is excellently done.

The boat's failure to return naturally rouses the village to query and eventually to rescue, so the village people are used as contrast to the two at sea, and this, too, is handled with skill. The entire book shows marked technical ability.

In *Three Men Die* Mrs. Millin tells of a woman who poisons two of her husbands and then her only son. Her character is described with clearness and economy and her life with her three husbands is given with real objective ability. The woman's likeableness, industry and thrift, her love of money and lack of feeling are immediately established. The whole presentation is pointed and actual, from the small house in Johannesburg to the lives and deaths of the three dull, hapless men who died at her hands. One after another they ceased to give what her grasping nature demanded and each died. Every separate part of the story is as real as a block in the hand, yet when the book is finished, and one has watched attentively as at a process done slowly, precisely that nothing may be missed, there comes a burst of bewilderment at how the mind of a poisoner works. We saw the dry, selfish logic of the woman, we noted that people found her attractive and then had moments of repulsion when they sensed something unnatural, but is lack of feeling enough to let logic dictate, and is that precisely the abnormality and horror of her type? If a poisoner's reactions are indeed so simple, then Mrs. Millin has drawn the character well, and one is mistaken in feeling that she has failed to disclose the sources of action in her heroine.

There is some play made at the end of the book with a theory of connection between sex and destruction, but though there is undoubtedly a deep play of the opposites here, it is not illumined by its introduction, nor is it easy to apply it to the story.

Reviews

AT THE PLAY

WHAT is a good actress to do when the dramatist requires of her to be a bad actress, and leaves it uncertain when she is to be a good actress acting as a bad actress, and when she is to be a good actress acting the part of a sincere, unhappy woman as a bad actress might see the part if she would forget she was an actress? That is one of the problems which Mr. Priestley sets Beatrix Lehmann in *Eden End* (Duchess Theatre); and it was far more interesting than the play, or anything in the play except the drunken scene between Stella's husband and her brother. Miss Lehmann did not solve the problem. No actress could solve it, unless the part was written by a very great genius so that no doubt could be left as to when Stella was Stella herself, when Stella was Stella acting, and when Stella was Stella acting her self as well as her part. Some critics have mentioned Tchekov in connection with *Eden End*: but the influence is not Tchekov's, but Pirandello's. Here is Pirandello without subtlety, without style, and with only an elementary sense of character. At first the play threatened to be a new *Magda*. In Dr. Kirby's home in the North of England in 1912 we meet Dr. Kirby, his daughter Lilian, who keeps house, his son Wilfred, home on leave from West Africa. There is, too, Geoffrey Farrant, an old suitor of Stella, the daughter who left home for the theatre, and is now in a mild, squire-like way, courting Lilian. The first act proceeded for a long time on a level of monotonous dulness which was oppressive: and when Stella returns there is only a threat of lightening. She has failed as an actress; but tells no one except the old family servant. She is married, as Lilian guesses from the mark of a ring on her finger (why did not Stella say the ring had been a convenience in hotels?); she has left her husband nine months ago, and has been

married for three years. She thinks she wants to leave the stage and live at Eden End. Her father tells her he has heart disease. Her old lover returns to her; and then, summoned by Lilian, Stella's husband turns up. Whenever a dramatic moment promises, Mr. Priestley shies away from it and stages one more of the perpetual dudogues of which the play consists. There is no coherence at all between the persons – no unity peculiar and essential to them. Mr. Priestley, it is true, tries to provide one by emphasizing their ignorance of the catastrophe of 1914; but this is not peculiar to *Eden End*, or to this family. It was the privilege in fact of all English families in 1912 – except perhaps Lord Roberts.

There are two good scenes in the play. One where Charles Appleby (admirably played by Ralph Richardson) and Wilfred Kirby have a solemn drunken discussion – it is funny, though far too long; the other between Stella and Lilian, where Lilian tells her sister what she has suffered and what Stella's character really is. One of the play's gravest flaws is Stella's failure to tell her father of her marriage, and how unsatisfactory it is. She has just seen her husband at their agent's in London. She knows what he is like. She would never have taken the risk of leaving her sick father to discover the fact of her marriage.

Mr. Johnstone, the author of *The Moon in the Yellow River* (Westminster Theatre) is a young Irish dramatist whose play is of more importance, more beauty, and nearer reality than any play acted in London since Mr. O'Casey's *Within the Gates*. It is a play of rebel Ireland – of the days of the trouble, when old friends were foes, and in the mists a man met dim enemies whose faces were dreadfully familiar. A man's foe was himself. There are three themes in the play, each sufficient for a drama: the old theme that the machine is the enemy of life: the theme

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Reviews

that if a man appeals to force he will find it is himself he is fighting; and the tragic motive of a father who hates his daughter because, to save her life, his wife's has been sacrificed. Poignant as is this theme, and beautifully rendered in the final scene between Dobelle (Esme Percy) and his daughter Blanaid (Shelah Richards), it rather overweights the play. The two other themes are superbly presented. Pathos, anger, violence, farce, richness of language, swiftness of thought – all contribute to the devastating disaster. When the pure idealist is shot by the 'gunman' there was danger of anti-climax in the scenes between Tausch, the German responsible for the Power House, Commandant Lenigan and Dobelle. Mr. Johnstone triumphantly overcomes it. He has the great gift of philosophical dramatic writing, and he was helped by an excellent company. Esme Percy was rather too Oriental in some of his gestures, and hardly succeeded in persuading us that he had been a great engineer; but his impatience, his humour, and his pathos were astonishingly right. Geoffrey Kerton's Tausch could not have been better, save that he spoke too fast at times. Bryan Coleman as the disillusioned idealist, was as fine in his one-ideaed resolution as Fred O'Donovan in his part as Lenigan. Bryan Coleman's fall, when he was shot, was heart-rending in its finality. Marie Ault and Nan Munro gave perfect performances, and Tyrrell's Willie – the corner-boy turned rebel soldier – was touching, absurd and at moments queerly dignified.

The season at the Old Vic began with *Antony and Cleopatra*. Praise first. The production of Henry Cass is excellent – dignified, simple and allowing the play to go at a proper speed (too often exceeded by the actors). Maurice Evans as Cæsar and Sofaer as the Messenger were excellent – the minor parts were adequately played – Octavia more than

adequately. But this play is Antony and Cleopatra. Wilfrid Lawson's Antony was a piece of grave miscasting. He murdered the poetry; he was frequently inaudible; he was never in the least heroic, even in a histrionic way, and seemed only at ease in the feasting scene. Mary Newcombe as Cleopatra was almost all one could wish – except Cleopatra. She had no charm, let alone fascination. Here is a drill-sergeant of love, not a mistress. Often her speaking was good; but she never ceased to play at being Cleopatra, and too often seemed to have a suspicion it was odd that she should be so playing. This great tragedy is a fire. It begins in the little crackers of Charmian and Iris' easy wit, mounts to flame, becomes white-hot, and then sinks into the deceitful glow of the great death-scene, and the uneasy ash of Cæsar's final entry. But it burns always. Hardly ever was there a fierce flame at the Old Vic: no aspiration, no transcendence, none of that rendering mortality immortal which is the play's very essence.

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CONTENTS FOR NOVEMBER

- | | |
|--|--|
| I. PARTIES IN CONFERENCE: | |
| (1) Conservatives at Bristol. | By Hugh Molson, M.P. |
| (2) Labour at Southport. | By A. L. Rowse. |
| II. ALEXANDER OF YUGOSLAVIA. | By C. F. Melville. |
| III. M. BARTHOU AND FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY. | By Frédéric Sabatier. |
| IV. CRISIS IN SPAIN. | By Professor E. Allison Peers. |
| V. MOSCOW AT GENEVA. | By W. H. Hindle. |
| VI. THE ARMAMENTS RACKET. | By W. Arnold-Forster. |
| VII. WANTED: A ROAD TRAFFIC POLICY. | By Mervyn O'Gorman, C.B., D.Sc., M.Inst.C.E. |
| VIII. NORTH ATLANTIC SHIPPING. | By C. Maughan. |
| IX. 'THE GOLDEN BOUGH' IN PORTUGAL. | By Rodney Gallop. |
| X. POPE AND THE MISCELLANIES. | By Norman Ault. |
| XI. THE NOVELS OF E. M. FORSTER. | By Peter Burra. |

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